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Daniel Deronda.

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" The sense of the World is short,
Long and various the report.
To love — and be beloved, —
Men and gods have not outlearned it,
And how oft soe'er they've turned it,
'Tis not to be improved."

MANUELA PARÉDES.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE RIGI.

IT was a warm afternoon in the latter part of June. A gentle breeze from the north was driving high the few white clouds in a sky of perfect blue. Two young men, leaving the Kaltbad Hotel, half way up the Rigi, had gradually ascended until they reached the base of that shoulder of the mountain which is called the Rothstock; there they turned northward, and began to climb its grassy slope, often pausing and turning toward the grand view which opened wider ranges at each upward stage. They did not know that they were only a few hundred yards below the little summer-house which crowns this minor peak, and had seated themselves to watch the cloud-shadows trooping across the blue lake, and the green fields and forests beyond. Behind them the grassy slope rose sharply.

The younger, a boy of twenty-one or two, was a fair type of life at its fairest. From his broad, low forehead heavy masses of chestnut hair were pushed back beneath

a broad felt hat. Large blue eyes, a full mouth, fine teeth, and a bold, frank air comported well with his erect and muscular figure, and gave promise of a manhood fit for labor and apt for adventure.

The elder brother was evidently nearing forty. From his forehead the hair had receded and was rather closely cut over the high crown, its dark brown streaked here and there with a silver line. The deep-set, steady eyes, the strong jaw, prominent nose, thin and mobile lips, and the full beard, shaven on the upper lip only and draping the lower face and the sinewy throat, betokened a man positive, tenacious, resolute, expert. In repose his face might seem stern, but the light of thought and the shadow of emotion swept over it so fast that such an impression of his character could not well abide. His tall and well-rounded figure also, by its quick and precise movements, indicated alert and disciplined self-reliance.

The brothers had been silent for some moments, absorbed in the panorama beneath them, when the elder spoke. "Walter, don't you hear voices behind and above us?"

"Yes, women's voices; they 'll be rolling stones down on us presently."

Even as he spoke a dark object sprang from the edge of the ledge above them, and, passing quite over their sheltered seat, fell at their feet.

The younger shouted, "Look out there!" adding, as he glanced at the missile, "That 's no stone, though." Lifting it from the ground, he found a leathern box in-

closing a large opera or rather field glass, and bearing in gilt letters the name

ADRIAN DYSART, N. Y.

The elder took the box from his brother's hand, and said, "Walter, I know that name. We must go and see who has dropped it."

A climb of a few minutes brought them in view of the upper slope, which receded above the brink of the ledge under which they had been seated, and revealed the figures of two women, slowly retracing their steps from the edge of rock whence the glass had sprung and been lost to sight. The parties were separated by a hundred yards or more, and the ladies, who were a little above and in advance, did not notice the approach of the brothers, who had thus the opportunity of examining the persons of their unconscious neighbors.

They were too unlike to be sisters. The elder was somewhat above the ordinary height of women. Her erect carriage, firm step, and the rounded symmetry of her figure betokened physical perfection and untroubled health. A full throat supported a small and well-poised head, and the face when turned toward the observer showed a rosy mouth, a straight nose with thin nostril, eyes full in form and in color like brown sherry, and hair of the same shade, rolled in wavy masses from the brow to the small ear, and knotted behind in sunny coils. Form and face recalled more than one type of classic beauty; there were suggestions of the Venus Victrix, of Athene, and of Artemis. Her dress, of soft

stuff, was of one shade, — a dark olive, — and relieved by a broad belt of bronzed leather, bordered with golden lines. The broad, low hat of black and white straw which shadowed her face was crested with a knot of poppies and golden wheat. Her age might be twenty-five, perhaps a little more. Her companion, a plump, fair girl of twenty, was habited in a coquettish mountain costume of gray and blue, which suited well her golden hair, soft gray eyes, and the arch regard in which lurked at once ready reserve and familiar ease.

The ladies had gained the little summer-house, and turned to seat themselves, before they perceived that they were not alone.

A moment later the elder gentleman advanced, with the glass in his outstretched hand. "If I am not mistaken, this is yours," he said.

"Oh, thank you, — yes, it is ours," and the elder lady stepped forward to receive it. "I am so glad to get it back, for my father has had it a long time, and it suits his eyes perfectly."

"You are a daughter, then, of Mr. Dysart, the banker of New York? I have the pleasure of knowing him slightly."

"Indeed! Do you know my father? You must be an American then? Yes, I am Helen Dysart."

"And may I introduce myself as Robert Audran, a Colorado farmer, and my brother, Walter Audran, an undergraduate of the Harvard Law School."

"Let me in return introduce you both to Miss Alice Carroll, of New Brunswick," replied Miss Dysart, smil-

ing. "We are glad to meet you, particularly since you know my father."

"Your father is not with you at present, I presume, Miss Dysart, as I left him in his banking-house less than three weeks since."

"No. Only my mother and brother are with us. They are coming up from Lucerne this afternoon to spend a day or two on the Rigi. They, too, will be glad to see some one direct from New York. I hope papa seemed well and happy when you parted from him."

Robert smiled. "I thought so, certainly, Miss Dysart. He was looking in admirable health and seemed to be very busy."

"And what about New York, Mr. Audran? — the dear, the beautiful city! One needs to have known these dead-and-alive old towns to appreciate New York."

"I fear that I can tell very little of that part of New York which probably interests you most, Miss Dysart. My recent observation of it has been mostly limited to the stage-route between Wall Street and the Hoffman House."

"Oh, it all interests me. I was born in Rutgers Street, went to school from Bleecker, had my first party in 23d, and have now retired to 57th Street."

"I am afraid I have not been in any one of those localities for five years. I can only tell you that when I came up town in the afternoon the streets were full of ladies, making purchases, I suppose, for the summer

vacation; and one day, a beautiful May afternoon, when I drove to the Park, I thought I had never seen the place so lovely or so full of people. The trees were in their freshest leaf, the turf was smooth as velvet, wistaria-blooms covered the trellises, the larch and spruce showed their finger-tips of pale green, clover and honeysuckle scented the air; the four-in-hands were out, there was a base-ball game on the Green, children were riding on ponies and in goat-carriages; it was brighter than Hyde Park ten times over, and more beautiful than the Bois de Boulogne."

"Oh, how charming it sounds!" said Helen. "I am there at this instant; and I suppose if we have any common acquaintances we shall find it out by and by. I must not begin by asking you if you know this one and that one."

"I know hardly any one, Miss Dysart, for I never spent a week at a time in New York, and my brief visits are always passed at a hotel."

"Well," said Helen, "I suppose we are not here, in the presence of all these mountains, for the first time, to cultivate our memories, are we?"

"No, I suppose not," answered Robert, "unless our memories are the best part of us: if so, they should be cultivated everywhere. But pardon me for even seeming to suggest that the past can have more of interest than the future for a lady so young as yourself." He began the sentence with a glow of pleasure at the forming thought, and finished with the hesitation which marked a sense of danger in its utterance.

She interpreted both as she answered, "I hope so certainly; and yet, —

> "the past will always win
> A glory from its being far,
> And orb into the perfect star
> We saw not when we moved therein.'"

She looked up, with a little blush, and a startled expression at finding herself quoting poetry. But there was a sudden light in his eye and a thrill in his ear, as he recognized the extract from a book half of whose pages were long ago transcribed upon his own brain. There is no introduction so comprehensive as the recognition that our own solitary pleasures have also been those of another. From that moment each knew that there were threads of sympathy woven between them far beneath the surface.

"Perhaps," continued she, "it would be better that you should tell us something of that which lies before us here."

"I can do that more satisfactorily," said Robert. "It is a new aspect of an old scene with me. I spent five months in Switzerland ten years ago, though I never climbed the Rigi before."

"To me it is all new," said Helen. "We came from Bâle yesterday; this is our first excursion."

"You have a great deal of pleasure before you, then."

"Was it a good plan to get our first impression of the Alps from this point?"

"Hardly so, I think. You have lost part of the

pleasure of approach by setting yourself within the open door at once. You should have seen this panorama from some more remote and northern point, — from the Uetliberg at Zurich; or if you had turned from your route at Soleure and ascended the Weissenstein, from either of those points, you would have seen most of what is now before you lying low and dim on the southern horizon, while you would also have seen how the Alps reach down their arms into the plains of Germany and France, in the Vosges and the Odenwald on either side of the Rhine, and the Rauke Alp of Wurtemburg and the Austrian Tyrol. You would have seen, too, the relations of the lakes and rivers and mountains to each other, which it is difficult to realize as you go from one to the other in detail. And you would also have had the great pleasure of studying the essential forms of the mountains, so that you could identify them by name at each forward step, though they might each time show you a different facet of the crystal. For the ordinary traveller the Rigi is the last practicable external point of view as he advances toward the semicircle of mountains which stretches round from the Vorarlberg, through the Engelberger group and the Bernese Oberland, to the Jura. You are here on the chord of the arc, the string of a strongly bent bow. Don't you think it would have been better to have had your first view from the centre of the circle? Here the northern third of that circle is out of sight entirely."

"Yes, indeed, I do think so," said Miss Dysart, and

the shadow of a genuine regret passed across her beautiful face. "I wish we had been so fortunate as to find an adviser as intelligent as yourself in time. You seem to have made a study of Switzerland."

"Mountains have always been a study to me. I was born among the hills of New England, and have chosen my home among the Rocky Mountains."

"Tell me, then," said she, "is it the study which has awakened the love, or the love which has developed the study?" She spoke impulsively, and the instinct that her question was too personal for slight acquaintance made her cheek burn.

Mr. Audran observed and rightly interpreted the blush as he replied, "Oh, they cannot be divided. Each will grow with the other if at all; neither would be worth anything if it were not so."

"Our friends seem to have begun already," said Miss Dysart, glancing toward Walter and Alice, who had left the summer-house and were seated on the bank below. The youth was pointing with his alpenstock to the horizon, and the girl was intently following with her eye. "May I not have a lesson?"

So Robert began, weaving together history, geography, legend, and science, stories of Cæsar and Hannibal, Diocletian and Maximin, Charles the Bold and Prince Eugene, Napoleon and Suwarrow, Escher and Agassiz, De Candolle and Dufour. There is much in a fit audience, and Robert himself was surprised at the continual inflow of suggestions and memories as, from this Mount of Vision, the whole chain of the Bernese Oberland rose

clear and fair before them in the light of the western sun.

At length the younger party returned to the summer-house, and Miss Dysart, resuming her parasol and field-glass, said, "I can hardly tell you, Mr. Audran, how much I am indebted to you. You have not only restored my glass, — you have opened my eyes to use it. But we must return to the Staffel. My mother and brother are probably there by this time. I hope we may meet again."

To which Robert replied, "We too have taken rooms at the Staffel by telegraph, and were on our way thither when we met you."

After supper the two parties encountered each other in the public room of the hotel, and Helen presented the gentlemen to her mother. Mrs. Dysart seemed about fifty years of age, but retained much of the freshness of youth, and a vivacity of manner which Robert better understood when he learned something of her history.

Eugenia Mavrosigi was the daughter of a Greek merchant, who, as a boy, had wandered from Smyrna to Boston, where he entered the employ of a house in the Mediterranean trade, in which he presently became a partner, and the son-in-law of the senior member. His eldest daughter had received part of her education in a private school at Portsmouth, where her favorite teacher had been Lucy Elmer, afterward the wife of Stephen Audran, and the mother of our friends. Miss Mavrosigi, after leaving school, had for a time lived in

Glasgow, where her father was acting as the resident factor of the Boston house, and there she met and married Mr. Adrian Dysart, at that time an engineer and afterward a banker in New York. During her foreign residence, she lost sight of her friend, now buried in the interior of New Hampshire, where her husband, Mr. Audran, had large possessions in lumber lands on the head-waters of the Saco and Androscoggin Rivers.

Mrs. Dysart was delighted at the opportunity of learning something of the fortunes of her former friend, and, more enthusiastic and less reserved than her daughter, gradually drew Robert into many details of his family and personal history.

They learned that from his first boyhood he had been accustomed to accompany his father on his long visits to the wilderness, where he spent several months of each year in moose-hunting and trout-fishing, — reluctantly given up a little later for college life at Harvard; how, by his father's death in 1858, he had been left to the care and charge of a large and involved estate, which had forced him to leave college, and to spend five years of arduous work, for the most part in the forest. By the death of his mother, in 1862, he had become the guardian of his brother, and in 1863 had found himself at liberty to enter the military service as Major of a Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers. At Spottsylvania, in 1864, he was so seriously wounded in the lungs that his life had been long in danger, and his career as a soldier was absolutely closed. In 1866 he had returned to his law studies at Heidelberg, but, after prolonged

and often-renewed experiment, had been obliged to accept the verdict of his physicians, — that the consequences of his wound would never allow him to become either advocate or jurist, and that if he would live at all his life must be passed in the open air. It was then that he had spent a long summer in Switzerland, and travelled through the East as far as India. Health had gradually returned to him, and seemed to be endangered only so often as he made the attempt to return to a studious or sedentary life. Four years previously he had become the owner of a Colorado cattle-farm, upon which, for the larger part of the time since, he had been living.

He had come on to New York, he told them, to confer with certain parties about the opening of railway connections in Colorado; and, finding that no important action would be taken before September, had determined to spend the interval in Switzerland and Germany. His brother had been for two years preparing for the profession which he himself had been obliged to forego, and after this summer vacation would settle himself for a period of study at Heidelberg.

In return for these confidences, Mrs. Dysart explained that after a severe illness a year previously, she had been advised to spend a summer in England, an autumn in France, and a winter at Nice, from which latter place she had returned two months before to Paris; and, St. Moritz being recommended for August and September, had determined to give the intervening time to such travel in Switzerland as her own strength per-

mitted, allowing to her children any larger opportunity which occasion might afford.

During this conversation, Helen, her brother Eugene, a fine, manly boy of nineteen, and Miss Carroll, had been talking with Walter, or listening to his brilliant music at the piano.

The candles were beginning to sputter in their sockets when Mrs. Dysart closed the conference, and the party separated for the night.

The next day they went to the Schiedeck to dine, and to get the beautiful prospective of the lake which that point affords. Returning to the Rothstock before sunset, they lingered far into the soft summer evening, entranced by the stories and the poetry which Robert, inspired by the scene, the hour, and the audience, recited to them. When they parted it was arranged that at three o'clock on the following morning, horses should be ready to carry the two young ladies to the Kulm to await the sunrise on the highest point.

Miss Dysart's room was at the rear of the house, and as she lay with closed lids awaiting sleep, the pictures of the day — lakes of sapphire and turquoise, innumerable snow-tipped mountains — rose and rose within her darkened eyes; the fresh night wind, sweeping up the valley above Goldau, fanned her cheek and played in her soft hair, bringing with it the scent of hillsides covered with June flowers and the far-off chime of a thousand cattle-bells. "Surely," said she, "this is the paradise of the senses and the imagination."

Mr. Audran was the first astir on the following morn-

ing. At three o'clock he sent off a porter with a roll of carpet to spread upon the damp grass of the mountain-top, a bundle of rugs, and the materials for making coffee. Very soon the young ladies made their appearance in ulsters and veils. Robert swung Miss Dysart's lithe and elastic figure to her saddle; Walter rendered like service to Miss Carroll. Eugene led the way up the stony road of three fourths of a mile which connects the Staffel with the Kulm, and in little more than half an hour the party were seated on the topmost knoll. Forever after, that morning mystery of beauty remained a fair and vivid picture in the memory of each one of them.

The night was not dark, but heavy with dampness; the moon, in her last quarter, with down-turned horns, hung low in the west; the blue dome above was set with fading lights, the morning star flamed in the forehead of the eastern sky; strands and pencils of auroral gray streamed in the north, narrow bands of dark cloud on the distant horizon were bordered with a pale yellow streak. How still it was! On the faint undertone of far-off, falling waters and whispering trees only the shrill note of the cricket in the grass was thrown. As their eyes became wonted to the pathetic blending of moonlight, dawn-light, and dream-light they saw that a floor of white mist was spread high above the lake and over the region beyond; it filled all the valleys and wound up the gorges of the hills. Ridge beyond ridge they rose, like islands in a white sea. Flushes began to grow upon and succeed each other in the east, —

pearl, rose, violet; brightening into liquid, serene, widespread amber.

Helen's face glowed with its radiance as she broke the long silence with Milton's lines, —

> 'Hail, Holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born!
> Before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice
> Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
> The rising world."

She paused, with dew-gemmed face uplifted, and Robert added to her text fit commentary from Bacon: —

"The first creature of God, in the works of the Days, was the light of Sense; the last was the light of Reason, and his Sabbath work ever since is the illumination of his Spirit. First, he breathed light upon the face of matter; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen."

She heard him with moistened eyes and swelling heart, but a moment after her voice rang clear and fresh, "See! oh, see!"

The mountains, which till now had shown their feet wound with wreaths of mist, and their cloven crests outlined black upon the golden sky, were just catching the rays of the yet unrisen sun. Pinnacle and dome and spire flashed back their welcome; the cone of Uri reddened, the shoulder of Titlis gleamed, the brow of Wetterhorn glittered, and the crown of the Jungfrau lifted high the orison of the Alps. Then came the great sun, — broad, shorn of its rays, — climbing through the clouds which clustered in its path until its slanting beams glanced across the summit on which they stood,

projecting their shadows far on the banks of fog below, like the spectral shapes of the Brocken. Borne on the rising wind, battalions of fog swept up the ravines of the mountains, to melt in warmer air as they passed the crest, as melt the columns of assault in the blaze of parked artillery; and even so, when the white day shone down upon the party, the exaltation and enthusiasm of that twilight hour gave place to the more human and trivial moods of every day.

Gathering up their couch of shawls, they began the descent. Half way down the steep Miss Dysart called to Robert, and asked him to get a pebble for her from the bank of conglomerate which lined the upper side of the road as a memento of the morning. With the spike of his alpenstock he dug from the breccia an egg-shaped nugget, so smooth and heavy and cold that he said, as he handed it to her, "By its weight that should be a black onyx; and if you permit me I will have some charm or trinket made for you and myself from it." He got no answer, perhaps expected none, as he added gayly, "For the present I will carry it; sometime you shall see part of it again."

Mrs. Dysart was waiting breakfast for them at the hotel, and curious to learn something of their excursion. The elder members of the party were singularly silent, but the lively Alice came to the rescue of conversation, describing the darkness and the light, the mountains and the mist, winding up her story with, "O auntie, it was just awfully grand and beautiful! It was like an infinite cathedral, with incense and music, and high mass

and benediction." And a smile of assent rose to every face.

They were to return to Lucerne at two o'clock, and meantime the ladies retired to make up their lost sleep.

Miss Dysart was ill at ease. Who was this man who had beguiled her into enthusiasm? Was he amusing himself by drawing out her fancy, imagination, and sympathies? What was he? A chance acquaintance, not three days known. She was vexed with herself and piqued at him. Was he intentionally doing this? Would he continue it? He was a man of the world, secure in a large experience of society, ready to weave a little web of romance when occasion suited, and equally ready to break the thread when need were. By degrees her complacency returned. "Forewarned is forearmed," she said. "If it pleases him to give me pleasure, I can take it as it flies. It is too agreeable to be needlessly foregone. I am not a child to be run away with. If this unlocking business is to go on, why should not I also open a chamber in his consciousness now and then?"

So she went to sleep, with a smile upon her sweet lips, and she saw her own smile, an hour later, as she stood before her glass arranging the rippling bands of hair around her classic head.

Mr. Audran was the only member of the party who did not seek sleep. A little chilly, after the exposure of the morning, he found a warm corner of the piazza, turned his back to the brilliant sun, stretched himself along a convenient bench, and, lighting his morning

cigar, fell into a review of *his* aspect of the situation. A verse of Shelley was haunting his memory, and now it came to his lips: —

> "A lady, the wonder of her kind,
> Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind,
> Which, dilating, unfolded her mien and motion
> As a sea-flower's unfolded beneath the ocean."

Firm and fair and fine was she. Nature had given her health perfect as her form. He knew the worth of that, for even at that moment he was conscious of a pang where the bullet, in passing through his chest, had twice shattered a rib. *She* at least did not know what it was to breathe with pain. Years of well-appointed life and thoughtful culture had ripened that Ionian grace which he fancied had come to her through her Greek mother. He had at home a bronze vase, found at Herculaneum; — she might have been the model for that figure of Ceres impressed upon it. How sweet were the tones of her voice, how crisp and perfect her articulation, how warm and soft the touch of her shapely hand! And over all lay an air of regulated impulse, of clear sense, and loyalty to common life. What a piece of good fortune to meet her, what a blameless pleasure to know her better, to guide her feet and her fancy through this Alpine land, which had for him such a perennial charm! Was there harm in it? Not to her at least, he thought. He was a ranchman, leading a lonely life in the bleak solitudes of Colorado: she was encompassed with the light and charm of a brilliant social life, — already pledged to some man of fortune and position, for all he

knew. Such were about her constantly, no doubt. She had but to accept one of these fortunate lovers to be installed in some home stately and rich as her father's house, in which he had recently spent an evening. And she was old enough and wise enough to know the value of such things.

And how about himself? He had been schooled in disappointments; his youth had been passed in the rude forests of the north, fighting for the fortunes of his family; manhood had been darkened by that eclipse of life which followed the battle-day at Spottsylvania; his plans and ambitions had dropped dead again at Heidelberg, where he found himself sinking under the confinement of study; and now that he was strong again, his youth was gone from him, he had grown wonted to solitude relieved only by books, had become exact and self-indulgent in his ways, and believed that he could not and would not now submit them to be reorganized by any woman. But why should he throw away this little chance episode which had intruded itself into his selfish life? It might disturb his pulses for a moment, but it would warm and brighten his memory by and by. He would be careful that no attention of his should ever compromise her, he would neither seek nor take what she might not discreetly give and happily remember.

So it came about that they all reached Lucerne that evening in good order, and well content with themselves and with each other.

CHAPTER II.

LUCERNE.

AT Lucerne, letters were awaiting both parties. Miss Dysart's was from her sister, as follows:—

NEW YORK, June 18.

DEAR HELEN, — Your last (Paris, May 24) came in due season on the 3d of June, and was as welcome as it was entertaining. After tiresome Nice, Paris must have been delightful. How I would like to have been with you at Versailles and Neuilly, and to have shared your evening drives in the Bois de Boulogne! We were delighted to hear Dr. Gudin's encouraging report about mamma, and hope her experience at St. Moritz will sustain his opinion. Probably this letter will find you somewhere in Switzerland, and you will have a splendid time before you go to the Baths in August. I wonder if you will anywhere meet a Mr. Audran, from Colorado, who had some business awhile ago with papa about a railroad. He came up to 57th Street one evening to finish a conference begun down in town. They spread their maps all over the dining-room table, and talked about cañons and coal-beds and wool. Papa said he was a very intelligent man, and he would have liked to

present him to me, but he did not know I was in the music-room, so I did not see him; but I liked to hear him talk, and wondered if he were a specimen of Rocky Mountain culture. He seemed more like a professional man than a farmer, and if you meet him I know you will like him. We are all well, at least I am, but I am not quite at ease about papa. I think he misses you and mother very much. I can see that he is not so light-hearted as he used to be. He does not seem to me to talk so much as usual, and I hear him walking to and fro in his room almost every night. If I speak to him, he is just as kind as ever, but he turns me off, or says that business is troublesome just now. A few weeks ago, a man whom I never saw before (a Mr. Louis Fayrolle) spent an evening here alone with him. The interview seems to have troubled father, and he has not been the same since. What can it be? Nothing, I dare say; for the other day, when I went over to Brooklyn to see Mathilde, I stopped in at the banking-house. Father was not there. Mr. Carlin must have thought I was fishing for information, for he said they were very busy, and business was satisfactory. That was a good deal for Mr. Carlin, was n't it? It is beginning to be very warm in town. Papa says we must open the house at Glenwood next week, and probably stay until October. I shall be glad to go there. It seems a great deal of needless trouble to keep this great house going for only two people; and in that sweet little cottage on the river, it will not be so lonely as it is here, all the day long. I am getting more and more wrapped up in

my music. Genevieve comes, and we read together hours at a time. We went the other day to a private organ recital at Steinway's, by Lindberg, — a new man, a Swede, about whom Morgan was very enthusiastic. People are going out of town fast; half the houses on the block are shut. Please bring home photographs — good large ones — of everything interesting; it will help me so much to realize what you have done. If you *do* meet that Mr. Audran, — he told papa he was going to Switzerland for three months, — be civil to him, for papa says he is worth cultivating. Every chance you have, you or mother must write to papa, it will cheer him up; and, please God, we shall all be together again by the middle of November. With much love to mamma, Eugene, and Alice,

Your affectionate sister,

JULIA DYSART.

Helen was disturbed by this letter, and in doubt at first whether she should show it to her mother. A moment's thought decided the question. "Mother's interest is greater, her knowledge more, her judgment better than mine. If trouble be coming, she has skill to deal with it; if disaster, courage to bear and sympathy to impart."

But Mrs. Dysart was as much perplexed as her daughter. Neither knew any cause for care or anxiety which could oppress Mr. Dysart. His letters to them had all been cheerful, and he was pressing money upon them with no hint of economy. So they came to the conclusion that Julia, who was perfectly devoted to her

father, must have been unduly nervous about him, and that there was no real occasion for concern.

The old Cathedral of Lucerne contains one of the finest organs in Europe, and three times a week in summer it is played by a master from six to eight in the evening, generally without choir or service, often without listeners, — an offering to Art and Religion the worthier that it is rendered at the hour appointed, whether men care to listen or not.

Mr. Audran had proposed that they should go together after an early dinner. The shadows were lengthening, but the evening sun still shone hot upon the lake side of the cathedral close. The clock was on the stroke of seven as they entered the aisle; a current of cool and fragrant air breathed over them, and the closing door shut out the passing world. They were alone; only in the far transept one black-robed figure knelt before a lighted shrine. From the high western windows bands and clouds of color fell across nave and chancel, lighting up the faded banners on the walls, and the sculpture of the pillars; Pentecostal tongues of flame glowed upon the heads of apostles and saints, a sheen of gold bathed the uplifted wings of a cherub, and a beam of violet fell upon the beautiful white side-altar. The church itself, gray with age, but threaded through with light, seemed less the work of men's hands than a symbol, grown out of the faith of a race and impregnate with the devotion of generations.

In such an atmosphere the conditions and conventions of present life lose their sway, and visions of the

life which is past and of the life which is to come rise upon the abstracted mind. And thus they were lifted and borne upon the surge of music rolling from the great organ. The artist, unseen, absorbed in his theme, knew not and cared not for any listener. The fugues of Bach, a psalm of Mendelssohn, and finally one of Mozart's masses were evolved without any sense of human presence or agency. The thunderous bass stirred the air with heart-shaking vibrations. As the sun's morning beams, striking across the sands of the desert, warm and expand the columns of air enclosed in the great statue of Memnon until æolian tones breathe from those old and stony lips, so at evensong, in the glow of parting day, the columns of the great instrument sent up from their brazen throats volumes of quivering and thrilling sound. The pathetic wail of the Kyrie gave place to the aspiration of the Sanctus, and the rapture of the Amen crowned the triumph of the Gloria. And so, silently, pervaded and harmonized by one emotion, they passed out into the purple evening, and saw the waxing stars tremble and the black mountains slumber in the darkened mirror of the lake.

The gleaming lights of the hotel and the rattle of carriages recalled our friends from their trance. They were soon seated in a corner of the supper-room, discussing the plans of the morrow over their tea. It had been arranged that the younger members of the Dysart party should take a short excursion under Mr. Audran's guidance, — Mrs. Dysart meanwhile going on to Inter-

laken, where they were all to rejoin her two days later; and Robert had to answer a host of questions as to outfit, costumes, routes, and halts. Busy as he was kept, he did not, however, fail to notice a gentleman and lady who stood a moment at the door of the room, then entered, and moved to a table not far from themselves. The gentleman, rather large and stout, with a military air and carriage, might have been a man of thirty-five. A round and close-cropped head, shaven face, waxed and pointed mustache and imperial, black paletot buttoned once, with a minute strip of crimson ribbon near the top of the left lappel, suggested a Frenchman and a soldier. The lady was probably twelve or fifteen years older, for her abundant hair was snowy white, and her face, though smooth and unwrinkled, had lost something of the firmness of its outline. She had a clear olive complexion, black eyebrows and eyes; shoulders still plump and shapely showed beneath the fall of black lace which hung from the back of her head and was gathered in a loose knot upon her bosom; her figure was tall, inclining to embonpoint; diamonds flashed on a beautiful hand as it moved in frequent gesticulation; and the whole impression was that of one impulsive by nature, but experienced and thoroughly disciplined in the ways of the world.

The two were apparently talking of their own affairs over a bottle of Moselle and a plate of biscuit; but something in their manner gave Robert a sense or a suspicion that they were really more interested in watching his own party.

They seemed to time accurately their stay in the room so as to quit it a few steps in advance of the Dysarts, and as the lady gathered her ample train in her hand, she managed, not quite accidentally as Robert thought, to leave some object upon the chair which she had occupied.

Robert would have called a servant, but Miss Dysart picked it up, and, stepping quickly forward, said, "Madame!" The lady turned, with a little air of surprise, as Helen, with outstretched hand, continued in French, "This is your card-case, is it not? You left it upon your chair." It was received with a graceful inclination, and a very sweet smile accompanied the words, "Mademoiselle is as good as she is charming. It is the politeness of a Russian or an American." And drawing from the case as she spoke a couple of cards, she presented them to Helen. Helen read, "Mme. la Baronne Waldeyer," "Baron Waldeyer," — a jewelled crest flashed on the card-case.

Helen's eyes sparkled as she answered, "Yes, madame, I am an American, — *bourgeoise.* We have no titles."

"None but those which you win. I too was once a Republican," added the baroness. "May I know the name of the gracious lady to whom I am indebted?"

"I am Miss Dysart, of New York, and this my mother, Madame Dysart," said Helen promptly.

A nervous tremor passed across the baroness's face as she exchanged a glance with her companion. The two elder ladies saluted each other, the baroness smiling graciously, Mrs. Dysart reserved and stately. After

a little pause the baroness added, "We live at Colmar in Alsace; and, lest our cards mislead you, I must explain that monsieur is the younger brother of my late husband and the successor to his title." Then, turning to Helen, "Miss Dysart will excuse my freedom, for her face recalls a friend of my youth. Do you stay long at Lucerne?"

Helen answered quietly, "We leave to-morrow, — all of us except my mother, who goes to Interlaken a day or two later." And as they had now reached the stairway, the parties divided, with courteous farewells, and went their different ways. Robert's happened to coincide with that of the baroness and her escort, and the latter took up the conversation.

"And is monsieur also an American?"

"Yes," said Robert, "I am a citizen of the United States."

"Ah! what a grand country! What vast extent! What marvellous resources!" said the Frenchman. "What education a century of republican liberty, begun and ended by a lustrum of heroic war, has given to your countrymen! In the days of the First Empire France called herself La Grande Nation; but you will claim, and we must soon concede, that rank to you."

Robert answered, "And Americans feel now a new interest and sympathy for France, which has survived terrible disaster and entered so fairly upon a career of republican life. Our colors, if not our flags, are the same: we both show the red, white, and blue. Am I right in regarding the Baron Waldeyer as a soldier of the French army, and a friend of the republic?"

"In both instances, monsieur. I entered the service in 1862 as a pupil of St. Cyr, and left it last year as lieutenant-colonel of the chasseurs of Vincennes. Another war would probably see my return to the service. Has monsieur a military record also?"

"Much less prolonged than yours. I served two years in our war of the Rebellion."

"In that case I hope you will allow me to learn something from you. I have so long desired to understand the American campaigns, which differ much from any of modern times in Europe. Mme. la Baronne will excuse us if we adjourn to the piazza."

An hour later they were still busy with comparisons and reminiscences over their cigars, and when they parted Robert had quite forgotten the suspicion with which he had at first regarded the strangers.

The lake-reflected sun threw its dancing lights upon the ceiling of Robert's chamber when he woke, and wisps of white mist, rising along the tree-covered hillsides, gave promise of at least one fine day. His first thoughts were disturbed by a sense of the responsibilities which he had assumed. What business had an old fellow like himself to undertake the care of two young women in a three days' tramp over mountains and wastes, he muttered. Ten chances to one they would all wish themselves well out of it before the excursion were half done. If anything should miscarry, it would spoil the pleasure of the relation which had grown up between them. How careful he must be to keep himself and them, all the way, all the time, on the perilously fine line between enthusiasm and common-sense!

While he was pursuing such speculations, Mrs. Dysart came to him on the piazza, full of her own version of the same themes.

"Mr. Audran," said she, "I hope you appreciate how very much I am obliged to you for your invitation to my children. They have been tied to me quite too long, and obliged to forego for my sake a thousand things which tempted them. This excursion will delight them, and they will remember you very kindly for giving it to them."

"If I could only be sure, Mrs. Dysart, that they would not be overtired or disappointed, it would be the pleasantest thing that could happen to me. You will tell me just what I must do or may do for them, — how much I may tax, and how much I must spare them. I am not used to the care of young ladies, and perhaps they will not accept care from me. Will they hold me innocent if they find me ignorant?"

"They will do just as you say, Mr. Audran."

"But that will make my responsibility all the greater. Have you no cautions to give me?"

"Your readiness to ask for them is the best proof that they are needless. Helen is very sensible, very full of resources; she will be ready for anything; and Miss Carroll will do whatever Helen desires. They spent a vacation together in the Catskills two years ago, and are used to mountain climbing. Both are perfectly well. You need not be too anxious about them. But if you will tell me just what your plan is, it may help them to make suitable preparations. They will thank you for every little hint you can give."

Robert unfolded his programme for each day of the trip, adding, "The ladies can each carry a small satchel by strap or hand, and a larger for which I will find conveyance. They should have a change of easy walking-shoes, dresses short and light for walking, something to shield the face from sun and wind, coats and shawls for the chance of a storm. I think of nothing else. We can communicate with you by telegraph, from which we shall never be more than three or four hours away."

"Shall they take food or stimulants of any sort, — cordials?"

"Not if you will trust me, madame. I was myself an invalid so long that I know very well what may be needed on an excursion of a few days."

"At least you will carry this," said Mrs. Dysart, handing him a heavy little purse.

"If you require me to do so, madame; but remember how lone and forlorn my life by myself is. Might I not be host for this time, since I so rarely have the opportunity? You cannot realize how much I enjoy the chance of such society, — what a privilege it is, or how long and pleasantly it will be remembered."

"We will owe you everything but money, Mr. Audran. I cannot look at you without recollecting how much I owe to your dear mother, whom you so much resemble."

When the party assembled after breakfast, Miss Dysart, to whom her mother had rehearsed Mr. Audran's suggestions, was disposed to be satirical.

"We ought to be very much obliged to you, sir, for your detail of proper wardrobe for us. It is a habit of your military life, perhaps."

"Yes, Miss Dysart; it is usual to see that one's command is properly equipped."

"Yours to command, sir! Shall we parade for inspection and muster? Shall we open our knapsacks? We may have started without brushes and combs, perhaps. What would happen then?"

Robert lifted his eyes to the rippling masses of her brown hair, and answered, "You would be forced to borrow mine, which would make them more valuable to me forever."

"Oh, how embarrassing a man can be when he takes to compliments!" said she.

"You don't seem very much embarrassed, Miss Dysart."

"No, I have heard such things before; but there will be no chance for you this time." She drew a little tortoise-shell comb from the *aumônière* which hung at her belt, as she spoke. "Now, to go to the other extreme, how do you find these?" raising her skirt to show a stout sole studded with small steel nails.

"I find them evidences of a sound understanding, Miss Dysart."

"And these?" extending her hands, neatly fitted with drab gauntlets *de suède.*

"I cannot say that I think so well of those."

"And why not, pray?"

"For two reasons. In the first place they will almost dissolve when they are wet."

"Your second reason should be better, for in the first you are mistaken."

"Put your glove in a glass of water for two minutes, then wring it, and look at the water and the glove, and you will see."

"Do you suppose I am going to spoil my glove to promote your complacency?"

"It is enough, — you admit it would be spoiled!"

"I do not admit it; I simply defer the test until I know whether I have to make further appeal from your omniscience. What is the second reason?"

"I don't know about giving it to one who is so afraid of being embarrassed."

"I know it is too trifling to be told."

"It is no trifle: it is true, it is unanswerable."

"Indeed! I wait to be convinced."

"Well, then, I say it is a pity that the hide of a rat should hide the hand of a lady."

"That will do, Mr. Courtier of Colorado. If it had been that Frenchman with the mustache *cirée*, I should not have been so much surprised."

"Baron Waldeyer is a very fine gentleman, Miss Dysart."

"Without debate. We are not looking for fine gentlemen just now."

"I think you had better keep your chaff until you get back, Helen," said Mrs. Dysart.

"No, mother; we shall be under too great obligations to Mr. Audran by that time. Now is our chance, if ever."

CHAPTER III.

ANDERMATT.

THE steamer was already at the quay, as the little procession moved from the hotel, Robert attending Mrs. Dysart. They parted at the gangway, and the travellers, going to the upper deck, saw at the farther end Baron and Baroness Waldeyer already seated.

Helen went straight up to them with a graceful morning salutation. "And are you too leaving Lucerne?" said she.

The baroness answered, "We go only to Fitznau, and shall return in two or three hours. To-morrow we go to Interlaken. And your mother, is she not with you this morning?"

"No. She also goes to Interlaken shortly," said Helen. "We shall join her there on our return from the excursion upon which we are now starting."

"Your mother is very courageous thus to allow her whole family to leave her," said the baroness, glancing over the party already seated near by.

"Oh, not all of us are hers, — only myself and my brother Eugene," indicating the boy. "The others

are friends. Miss Carroll travels with us. The Messrs. Audran are but recent acquaintances."

"I see now," said the baroness, "there is no family likeness except between yourself and your brother; but neither of you resemble your mother greatly."

"We are both said to be like our father. My mother is repeated in my sister Julia, who remains at home in America."

"You are three, then, — and no more?" inquired the baroness.

"Only three," said Helen.

"Your mother must be so happy in you! I feel it, for I, alas! have no children. One I had, — she would have been about your age, — but she is gone from me," said the baroness. "In the order of nature we survive the friends of our childhood.; it is only in children that we can keep our hearts alive. The baron has been in the place of a son to me. If it were not for him, I should be alone in the world. When the death of my husband left me thus lonely and gave to the baron an estate, he left the army to make a home with and for me; but I cannot hope to keep him always. He is a senator of France, a commander of the Legion of Honor, with an immense talent for affairs. I ought not even to wish to detain him from the life which I cannot share with him. It would be different if I had a daughter like you; but then, perhaps, she too might wish to leave me," glancing at Mr. Andran. "It is one of your English poets, I think, who has so well rendered a sentiment of our provincial, Pascal, —

"Why should we shrink and fear to live alone,
Since all alone — so Heaven has willed — we die?"

But it is very selfish in me to think and speak so sadly when I am with you, my dear young lady"; and with a quick, almost convulsive movement, she drew Helen toward her and kissed her forehead.

Helen drew back in surprise. She had not dreamed of such effusive tenderness in a stranger; but she saw that the eyes, which had seemed so haughty and cold the evening before, filled with tears, and that the lips were trembling with a genuine emotion; and, with an instinct as sudden and sincere as that of the baroness, she returned the kisses on both cheeks, as she said, "Dear lady, I am sure you will always have some one to love you."

"It is easy to see that mademoiselle has found the way to my sister's heart," said the baron; and he rose and removed his hat, with admiring eyes.

The remainder of the party were too far away to hear this conversation, but they watched the tableau with astonishment. The baroness noticed their surprise, and, rising with dignity, extended her hand to Helen with a lovely smile, as she said, "My dear, I shall hope to see more of you at Interlaken. You will forgive me for having made a scene here. Adieu." The baron bowed profoundly, the baroness took his ready arm, and they walked slowly to the bow of the boat. A few moments later they passed on shore at the first landing.

Helen rejoined her friends. Alice was the first to

speak her surprise. "Well, Helen, of all things in this world! You! What is it all about?"

"I don't know! I don't know!" she answered, almost sobbing. "I don't understand it any more than you do. She has made me perfectly nervous. She seemed to be so unhappy and so tender-hearted."

"But why should she have shown either to you? and why should you, of all people in the world, have gone to pieces in that way, all at once?"

Helen answered, "I will tell you what was said, and you may make out of it what you can"; and she recounted the words with perfect accuracy.

Alice listened with an incredulous air, and said, "I think it was a very pretty piece of acting all round."

Helen's eyes flashed. "You ought to be ashamed to say such a thing — of me at least. There was nothing but gentle thought and feeling in her, I am sure."

Alice continued perversely, "Well, I don't believe that a person who could pose and swim, as she did last night, and then break and stiffen in that sort of way, can be sweet and sound all through."

"Perhaps not," answered Helen. "Not many people are; but I am sure she has a sweet and tender heart. I don't know when I have been kissed in such a way. Poor, poor woman!"

"What do you think, Mr. Audran?" said Alice.

"I think I understand both of you on this occasion," answered Robert, "much better than I do the baroness; and I believe with Miss Dysart that she was, for the time, overpowered by some sudden and honest instinct.

How long it will last and what will succeed it I could not venture to predict."

"And what do you say of the baron?" asked Alice.

"I should say that he behaved with perfect propriety to both ladies, and was as honest as his sister. I liked him very much last night."

"We shall see more of them, I presume," said Helen, who had regained her usual serenity. "Mother will have formed an opinion about them by the time we get to Interlaken."

A little after noon the boat reached Fluelen. They were soon secure in their places on the top of the diligence, and traversing the valley of the Reuss, rich in historical interest. Monastery and convent and feudal tower came into view and were left behind. The scenery grew wilder and more rugged hour by hour as the long valley links contracted. Fields of purple moss covered the rocky slopes, and the mouths of wild and dark gorges opened and closed upon them as they passed. Now they skirted smooth reaches of river, and again wound around the face of jutting ledges, far above the thundering torrent. The valley became a chasm, close-walled with barren rock. A cold wind, spray-laden, came from the plunging waterfalls above them. Here and there a mountain peak, snow-tipped and ruddy with evening glow, rose above the rock wall over their heads. Premature twilight gathered around them as they crossed the Teufelsbrücke in a cloud of spray, and the blackness of midnight seized and shrouded them in the long tunnel of the Urner Loch. At length, from its dark portal,

they issued into a pale green Alpine valley, set among snowy mountains and lit by still stars, whose twinkle seemed repeated in the lights of Andermatt just before them. The jaded horses were forced into a gallop, a cloud of steam rose from them in the cold night air, and the first day's journey ended as they drew up at the porch of the Hotel Oberalp.

After supper they went to the parlor, a simply furnished room, but rich with the warm glow of an open wood fire which threw soft, dancing shadows up and down the wall. There was a piano in the room, and Helen, sitting down, began to play. Her musical instinct seemed to grow with that on which it fed as she ran on with remembered fragments from Beethoven, Gounod, Liszt, — dreamy, yearning, sorrowful, jubilant. Her swift white hands gleaming along the keyboard, the grace of her lithe and mobile figure, and her brown eye glancing in the firelight which played upon the side of her face made a charming picture.

Robert sat at the end of the piano, awed, delighted, and amazed, as the river of harmonies, long and bright, flowed on, drawing its liquid treasure from every cave and spring of the human spirit. Helen's image, graceful and sweet, lingered on his mental vision long after they had separated for the night. Was she the ideal woman, of whom, before his morning star grew dark, he was always dreaming? Many a time he had for a moment fancied that he had found her, and many an image which his young heart had glorified had turned to clay, — sometimes very paltry clay. The frolicsome child,

whom he had vainly tried to invest with a purpose and a soul; the gay young girl, who numbered and published her conquests; the fair egoist, in whose fondness, even, was revealed only self-love and a hysteric perspective of great exactions and small requitals; the pretty fool, whose graces could not conceal her emptiness; the passionate creature, whose hot-hearted and wrong-headed nature contained infinite probabilities of error; the designing flirt, who was always "taking account of stock"; the weakling, dissolving in fears and tears when the signal for action was flying, — what contrasts all these made to this charming, just-discovered Helen! It was no longer possible to conceal or deny it to himself: she had taken possession of his thoughts. For three nights he had dreamed about her, and he took it for a sign that it would be well to analyze the nature of his emotions. It would never do for him to "go all to pieces," as Alice said, before he knew it.

He must think the matter out. Nothing could be pardoned to him on the score of youth or inexperience of the world. And Helen herself was so alert, so absolute in her self-control, that she might understand him before he knew himself. She must be more than twenty-five. A physical organization so perfect could never have known any period of eclipse; consequently for many years she had been an object of admiration and desire, a beautiful woman, — like Princess Zobeide in the Arabian Nights, "a delight to beholders and a temptation to God's servants." Her father's wealth, her metropolitan home, her education and accomplishments, had

no doubt brought around her a court of admirers. With every mode of approach and pursuit she was familiar; and since she remained Miss Dysart, and heart-free, she must also be familiar with every form of defence and evasion. But was she heart-free? He had no clew by which to answer his own question. Certain it was that if free she were, it must be because she was uncommonly hard to win. He did not wish her less difficult. To him there was a special charm in her vestal temper; it might be less yielding, less fond, but it must be of purer and richer tone. A nature so sufficient for itself must have great reserves of treasure to impart. There would indeed be force and breadth and depth in such companionship. This would be no light o' love, needing to be watched and nursed forever. On such a faith a man might rest. There was vision in her faculty, guidance in her counsel, succor in her strength, and would there not be rapture in her tenderness?

What chance of all these for him? His life was more than half-spent. It had been devoted to the redemption of the fortunes of his family and to the service of his country; but a few years since his life itself had hung in the balance, and until very lately had been compromised by the possible results of his old wound. It would not befit the honor, which in his inmost heart he paid her, to drag down her bright life with the care and weight of his infirmity. Supposing the years to come were to be weary and hard as the years that were past, to join her lot to his would be to clip her bright wings, to fetter her beautiful feet, to divert her ambition from its true and rightful aim.

What had he to offer, — what fortune or estate, what position? He possessed a few thousands in bank, a few sections of prairie and meadow, where as yet only buffalo-grass would grow, lying far away on the confines of civilization, outside of all society or culture or art. At what he called his home he had a jabbering Mongol, epicene of form and office, who wore a blue cotton blouse, baggy trousers, and served as cook, laundress, and chambermaid; a cute but coarse Yankee for a partner and manager; a few forlorn Mexican herdmen, and now and then, by way of guest, a stray Ute or Navajo Indian. Could he offer her a share in such a life as that? Preposterous! But what else was there? His scheme had been well laid. Thus far, success had exceeded expectation. His last sale of cattle had netted him five thousand dollars, and his herds were doubling, and would double year by year. He had a great scheme of irrigation which was to transform the vast plains, where now the bunch-grass and the gama scarcely hid the gray cinders of the soil, into fields of waving wheat and the purple bloom of the alfala. But all this was prospective, and were he now to retreat and attempt to realize upon his scheme, he would secure only some thirty or forty thousand dollars, — not much more than the sum which her father's family expended in a single year, and he would be absolutely without an occupation or an aim. And no man in such a position, he felt, could long command and retain Miss Dysart's interest and sympathy. The life of an idler and a *dilletante* would suit neither of

them. Action, progress, and a worthy ambition were the conditions of life for both.

Must he, then, give up the thought, and with it her, — elect, precious, rare? 'T would be the end of love for him. Forty now, he would be fifty before the reasons which governed this case would cease to govern all. The glow, the bloom, was fading out of his life. From twenty to thirty, the young man had many a time "lightly turned to thoughts of love." Strong as was his determination to seek and to accept no ties which could embarrass him in the work which was laid upon him, yet so abiding and subtile was the attraction of women for him that he had never been long without an object for his dreams. However remote and solitary his life might be, it had always kept an altar-flame alight, if only to an unknown divinity. But more than once he had tasted the sweetness of some fresh young heart, and, with an effort at self-repression which wrung every fibre of his soul, had fled from contact to cherish his remote and solitary worship of the ideal. And in his later years, during the stir of war, the eclipse of the sick-room, the renewed grasp after the material objects of life, nature, subdued at every turn, had grown weary of love without hope. Upon his altar now for years had been only the ashes of a smothered heart.

Of late he had more than once said to himself that, obedient as he had always been to the leadings of duty, the time might come, must come, years hence, — at fifty, perhaps, — when it would be as necessary for him to have a wife as hitherto it had been necessary not to

have one. Thus he would take on matrimony and spectacles about the same time. Both of them would be evidences of decay,—clear cold flint, gold-rimmed. Meantime he must thrust from him this sudden, heaven-sent opportunity. None like it ever was, ever would be,—this pure, warm young creature, this "spring of youth and hope and love and gladness," dropped into the "winter of his discontent." Yes, he should probably have to content himself with the spectacles, and he must put away forever his dreams and visions of maiden charms, of the final and coy caress, of the heart unworn, the mind unbound,—

> "She who stands beside me like my youth,
> Transforms for me the real to a dream,
> Clothing the palpable and the familiar
> With golden exhalations of the dawn."

He was sitting bent over the fire, now smouldering. Two sticks which had kindled fell apart, the burning surfaces grew dim and were covered with ashes. He turned them over and laid them close against each other. Each reinforced the heat of the other, the air drew up between them, and lighted the coals to a new glow; presently a light flame wavered all along the line of contact. He waited until they were burned out, and then he rose, with a couplet of Landor on his lips:—

> "I warmed both hands before the fire of Life.
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FURCA.

NOTWITHSTANDING his vigils, Robert was the first astir next morning. His earliest care was that provision should be made for an ample breakfast, — not approving the Swiss custom of a roll and a cup of coffee as preparation for a day of cold and exposure; his next was a visit to the stables, where he inspected and selected an open carriage capable of accommodating six, striking every tire and wheel, examining every bolt and nut. A similar inspection was given to the harness, and to the eyes and feet of the horses.

Helen watched the process from the window of her chamber with approval. It was quite in keeping with her idea of Mr. Audran. She said to herself that, in camp or in court, so bold, practical, and provident a spirit would command success, accepting no poor service, brooking no contradiction. It was evident that he was accustomed to be obeyed: it was to be hoped that he was not in the habit of being arbitrary.

It was a rude morning. Leaden clouds were piled in the west on the far-off summit of the Furca, and on the nearer ridges of the St. Gotthard; a little powdering of snow lay over the short grass; the Reuss, shrunken to

a rivulet, fretted feebly down the valley; the northern sides of the great bowlders were white with snow, and the southern and western damp with rain. The chance of improved weather was in the coming day; and Robert, surveying the preparations of the ladies carefully as they came to the piazza to take their places in the carriage, thought that nothing could be neater or more complete, — large gray ulsters, little gray felt hats, tied down with long blue veils, the ends of which were crossed behind, and knotted at the throat in large bows. The light of a quickened life was in their eyes, the rose and pearl of youth unworn upon their cheeks; their sunny looks lent a cheer to the gray, unsmiling day.

The first part of the route followed the zigzags of the Urseren Thal, which, like a broad and shallow groove, divides the Italian summits from those of the Bernese Oberland. Planes of red-brown rock, sometimes bare, sometimes heath-covered, sloped gently down to the little stream, and between, the road slowly mounted the long incline toward the west.

Walter and Eugene sat beside the driver, Mr. Audran and the ladies in the body of the carriage.

"How do you find this, Miss Alice?" asked Robert.

"Perfectly splendid," she answered. "Here we are on the very roof of the world. Nobody knows, and nobody cares. We are just having our own way, all by ourselves. Oh, if you gentlemen could only know how delightful it is for girls to get out of Mrs. Grundy's sight, and not to be forced to walk in her ways!"

"But surely you don't mean to say that Mrs. Grundy has ever been hard on you," said Robert.

"Indeed I do. I mean to say that every young girl who lives among people has to sacrifice, perpetually, her innocent pleasures and instincts, for fear of being misunderstood and talked about. And I mean to say, also, that the restrictions about girls are twice as many and twice as hard as those for older ladies, and that they are twice as hard to bear. So, you see, I have — twice two are four, and twice four are eight — eight times as much of a quarrel with Dame Grundy as my mother, for example."

"And what do you suppose your mother in New Brunswick would say if she knew just what her daughter was doing this morning?"

"She would be delighted, I 'm sure, and would say that it was very good of somebody to have contrived so much pleasure for all of us. How are we going to pay our debts, Mr. Audran?"

"Don't distress yourself, Miss Alice. When it begins to be a sacrifice to provide pleasure for you, and to share your enjoyment of it, we will go our ways and you shall go yours. It is very good of you too to come so far out of your road on the chance of being repaid. What, for example, are you looking for to-day? Do you know where you are going and what you have come out into the wilderness for to see?"

"No, I know nothing about it. Do you, Helen?"

"Yes," said Helen, "thanks to Mr. Audran's description on the Rigi, I seem to myself to understand, — in part at least."

"Will you give us your idea of it, then?" said Robert.

"I know," said she, "that the boat brought us to the foot of — indeed, part way through — the wall of mountains which bounded our southward horizon on the Rigi; that, at Fluelen, we entered the valley of the Reuss, which separates the Grisons from the Bernese Oberland; that we followed the river almost due south, about twelve miles, to Amstag, rising fifteen or eighteen hundred feet; that then we turned westward, leaving the Grisons behind and on our left, and made a much sharper ascent, and now are going almost to the top of the ridge which divides the waters of the Rhine from those of the Rhone and connects the southern Italian chain with the northern; that on this southern chain are the passes which lead down into Italy, — the St. Gotthard, the St. Bernard, and the Simplon; and we shall follow this little Rhine stream to its source, about twelve miles away, and then climb sharply up three or four miles more to the Furca, where we shall be about eight thousand feet above the Lake of Lucerne. When we get there, directly before us will be the deep valley of the Rhone, three thousand feet below; on the right will be the great mountains of the Oberland, and on the left the chain of Monte Rosa, the Matterhorn, and Mont Blanc. How nearly am I right, Mr. Audran?" with a brilliant smile.

"You are very right. The whole situation is as clear in your mind as in mine, and I can add very little, except that you must not expect to see Monte Rosa or

Mont Blanc, because nearer mountains shut them off; but they are there, as you have described them; and if you have formed your ideas from my description, you are the best listener man ever had. It makes me feel as if I had put myself on record, and should be held accountable for all errors and deficiencies."

"Because you are so clear yourself, Mr. Audran. I told you that you had done more than find my glass, — that you had given me eyes"; and she lifted her bright face with such a frank, responsive glance that Robert drew a quicker breath as he bent down to Alice's ear, and repeated, in a tone heard by her only, —

"'Do but look at her eyes! They do light
All that this world compriseth.
Do but look at her hair! It is bright
As eve's star when it riseth.
And from her arched brow such a grace
Sheds itself through her face, —
As alone there triumphs to the life,
All the gain, all the good, of the elements' strife.'"

Alice flushed with pleasure as she turned toward Helen, whose look had changed to one of surprise and dissatisfaction. "Whispering?" said she. "How very unlike Mr. Audran!"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Dysart, but, as you spoke, I could not help recalling a verse of Ben Jonson, and repeating it to Miss Alice. Perhaps I ought to be ashamed of my impertinent memories."

"You have not the least occasion, Mr. Audran," said Alice. "You are perfectly right in admiring Helen.

We all think that every one who is not stupid must do so."

"Yes. I make no excuses for *that*," said Robert; "but Miss Dysart may find it inconvenient if all her admirers put their admiration into words. The truth is not always to be told, you know."

"That will do for the present," said Helen, "or I must change places with one of those boys. I 'll go off with Eugene. Did you ever know a brother who could not take the conceit out of his sister as fast as all the rest of the world could put it in? And, after all, Mr. Audran's compliments are like heat lightning, — they shine, but they don't strike. He won't imagine that I take them for more than they are worth. If it pleases him to say pretty things, he must be indulged. *Le roi s'amuse!* When he pleases to be in earnest, as he was in his lesson on the Rigi, then I shall listen with attention." As she looked straight in his face his eyes fell abashed.

"Never mind, Mr. Audran," said Alice; "she *will* get the best of everybody, — that 's her way; but she is as good as she can be for all that."

"Well, it must be admitted," said Robert, "that no experience of the world will help a man particularly in his dealings with women. Here am I, something like forty years old, quite cast down by the rebuke of one more than ten years my junior, and very grateful for the encouragement of another, ten years younger yet."

Helen smiled. "I shall begin to think you *have* lost

your head, Mr. Audran, if you expect to make your peace by telling all the world how old I am."

"Well, I am recovering it, under discipline," said Robert; "and now, while the carriage is going round these long zigzags, shall we cut across them? We may take it very easily and yet keep far ahead of the horses."

The path lay over beds of loose stone, washed into the foot-furrow, over tables and ridges of rock, through hollows filled with blooming heather, where the rock-rose and the club-moss and the purple erica brightened the treeless hillside. The gentian wrapped its whorl of blue around an unopened calyx, and here and there a sprig of edelweiss reared its fleecy crown like a white coral branchlet. A fresh, damp wind from the south drove heavy columns of vapor from the valleys below; now and then came a momentary spit of rain, and then the sun would break through and glint upon slanting showers of snow trooping along the sides of the Spitzlihorn and the Galenstock, which was now becoming visible. A walk of an hour and a half brought them to the little hamlet of Realp, beyond which, for five miles, to the summit of the Furca Pass, are no human habitations. They sat awhile on the benches in front of the little hospice, drinking "Acier du Rhone" from the bottle held by the burly Priest Hugo, who, in cowl and stole, tempts passing travellers with good wine. The talk was of the route, and the question whether they should attempt the next stretch of five miles on foot. The Capuchin had much to say of the Elmeten and Wasser Alp, which were to be traversed. The ladies were in favor of walking

over so many summits, as they supposed; but when Robert explained to them that, in the local language, "alp" means a pasture-ground, and that these particular pastures were very sterile and monotonous, that the carriage-road really gave a better view, and that there was a good chance of a snow-storm before they could reach the Furca, they concluded to ride, — a fortunate conclusion, for as they were entering upon the last mile a tempest of sleet and snow and sharp hail broke over them with such force as to blind the horses. The driver descended and stood between their heads, holding the bridles, and the party clustered in the lee of the wagon, rolled in plaids, with backs turned to the wind. Fortunately it proved to be the last storm-gust of the day, and when, a little after noon, they emerged upon the plateau of the Furca, the meridian sun was shining from a cloudless sky on a pure surface of fresh-fallen snow and down into the deep chasm of the Rhone valley, while far and clear the peaks which cluster around the Finster-Aarhorn, loftiest of the Bernese mountains, shone in dazzling white.

Half an hour at the little inn, and they started again. At the second turn of the road they alighted, packed all needless wraps, bade the driver order dinner at half past three at the Hôtel Glacier du Rhone, and watched the carriage as it went spinning down the sharp curves and whirling round the angles of the road.

Presently they came upon the border of the glacier, in some respects the most imposing in Switzerland. A thousand feet high, almost a mile wide, precipitous, it,

more than any other glacier, justifies Coleridge's description: —

"Motionless torrent, silent cataract!"

Rifted with chasms, full of dropping wells, and glittering in its white wreath of new-fallen snow, fitly named by the ancients the Pillar of the Sun. From beneath it the infant Rhone, a pale opaline brook, dashing over the stones of the moraine, begins its long way to the sea.

A loitering walk of two hours and a half along the side and upon the surface of the glacier brought them to the end of the day's stage at the hotel below, to a well-served dinner, and an evening of story-telling and music.

CHAPTER V.

THE BARONESS WALDEYER.

ON the morning of the same day, while her children were thus climbing the high places of the world, Mrs. Dysart, with her friends the Irwins, made the easy transit from Lucerne to Interlaken by rail. As she descended from her carriage at the portal of the Bellevue Hotel, she saw the imposing figure of the Baroness Waldeyer, attended by her brother-in-law, the baron. They were standing on the upper balcony, and an uneasy sense of surveillance drifted across Mrs. Dysart's mind. She could not help feeling that her coming was waited for and watched by these people. They gave her a sense of the evil eye, renewed again, later in the day, as she met them in the *salle-à-manger*. This feeling was painfully quickened when, after dinner, a servant brought to her a note bearing the baroness's crest and monogram. It was a very simple note, however: —

"Will Madame Dysart have the goodness to receive Madame la Baronne Waldeyer in her apartment this evening, if convenient? Mme. Waldeyer desires to speak of a conversation which occurred yesterday morning with Miss Dysart on Lake Lucerne."

It surprised Mrs. Dysart that this note was written in

English, with an ease which indicated perfect familiarity with the language. What instinct it was which made Mrs. Dysart shrink from the interview, she could not have explained; but, with some painful hesitation, she concluded that as the note was courteously worded, and suggested a reason which might well be sufficient, she was not at liberty to decline it. So she returned brief answer: —

"Madame Dysart will be pleased to receive the Baroness Waldeyer in her apartment at eight this evening."

Thus, while the younger party were gathered about a round table in the far-off hollow of the mountains, and stories of old romance and modern adventure went round, the matrons were settling themselves for a far different conversation. Punctually at eight the card of the baroness was brought in, and a moment after she herself entered, with a serene but very serious expression on her beautiful face. Mrs. Dysart motioned her to a seat. It happened to be one which shielded the baroness's face from the light, but left that of Mrs. Dysart in full light of the chandelier, and a quick sense of the disadvantage occurred to her before a word was spoken.

The baroness began. "Madame is very kind to give me this opportunity. I am sensible of it, and wish to acknowledge it now, before — if ever — madame shall have any reason to regret this occasion. My great respect for madame, and my desire to possess something of her esteem, will not allow me to approach the matter of which I wish to speak by any disguise or

evasion." She paused for some reply, but Mrs. Dysart's only answer was a look of surprised inquiry.

The baroness resumed. "I have a special design and interest in knowing more of Miss Dysart, and, for that purpose in seeing her often; and, as this cannot be without your knowledge and consent, I am fain to seek it through them."

She paused again, and this time so definitively that Mrs. Dysart was obliged to reply, and she said, "Madame will understand that I am at a loss to know why she, a perfect stranger, should feel such an interest in my daughter."

The baroness frowned slightly, and said, "You have called her your daughter. She *is*, certainly, the daughter of your house; she is, doubtless, the daughter of your heart; but madame will understand me better when I say that I know she is *not* the daughter of your blood!"

Mrs. Dysart clasped her hands before her, and, bending forward, with passionate glance, cried, "And how comes it that, for the first time in twenty-five years, I hear this from a strange woman in a strange land?"

The baroness's steady gaze was fixed on her as she answered, "Madame admits the *fact*, then? She has yet to learn that, in announcing this truth, I speak from a motive which is not, for me, less urgent than any she can have for concealing it."

"It remains for you, then, to declare it," said Mrs. Dysart coldly.

"Yes," said the baroness, "that is inevitable. Do you know the name of Manuela Parédes, Mrs. Dysart?"

"I have heard it," was the answer.

"And you know, then, for what name it was changed?"

"For one which the bearer did her best to dishonor," said Mrs. Dysart boldly and bitterly.

"We will speak of that by and by, madame," said the baroness. "It is in the daughter of Manuela Parédes Dysart that I take so great an interest. She is *my* daughter." It was spoken with an air of mingled shame and pride, which immediately gave place to one of great gentleness and sweetness as she added, "And you, my dear madame, who have succeeded to a name which once was mine, and have borne it with so much grace and honor, can you retain an unkind feeling toward one who opened to you the way to years of honored and happy life, — to love, which is the charm of life, — to a secure and brilliant home which none invades or threatens, — to a sweet group of children, full of grace and promise? Can your mother's heart wonder that mine yearns toward the only child I ever bore?"

Mrs. Dysart softened as she heard the earnest, tremulous, tearful voice of this proud and desolate woman, and she said gently, "It is a strange story, in which so many chapters are wanting that I cannot yet yield my faith to any. You must tell me your history, fully and fairly, before I can have anything to say to you."

"Listen, then," said the baroness. "You will hear from me much which you must have already heard from your husband, and much of which I believe him to be ignorant. Of the truth of its facts you will not doubt. I mean, also, that you shall equally believe in the sin-

cerity of the sentiments which I profess. If I show my whole nature to you, just as it is, — if I am thoroughly true to that, — then you cannot choose but know it is the truth I speak. Yes, I was Manuela Parédes, a Mexican girl, born and bred in the small and remote state of Zacatecas, among dry mountains and deep valleys, taught in an Ursuline convent from my sixth to my sixteenth year, and then, when my mother died, taken home to be the companion of my father's solitary life at his mining haciénda. It was there I met Mr. Adrian Dysart, — a young man of twenty-five, a skilful engineer, trained in the mining schools of Saxony. Born in England, of Belgian parents, he had spent his life from seventeen to twenty in the banking-house of Ferreira in London ; from twenty to twenty-three in the mining school at Freiburg; then one year in the service of an English mining company in Peru ; and thence, dissatisfied, had gone to Mexico, where my father found him, and took him to Zacatecas to explore his silver mines, which, after the manner of his ancestors, he had worked for many years at a moderate profit. He brought with him all that was then known of geology ; he explored the old works ; he saw for himself and persuaded my father that the deepest shaft of his old-fashioned mine, if pushed into the heart of the mountain, would strike a great body of rich ore. The argument was good, the profit would be great. To realize it my father invested all his means and taxed to the utmost his local credit. Such was the state of affairs when I, a young girl of seventeen, returned to my father's house.

"Adrian was handsome; so, I believe, was I. No other man who came to our remote abode could compare with him; no other girl whom he could meet there had even *my* poor power to attract him.

"My father wished in every way to bind to his interests one for whose honor and probity he had such unlimited respect, and who he fully believed would be the architect of a great fortune for himself. He threw us together; and Mr. Dysart, mistaking, perhaps, the feeling which he had for me, asked my hand. We were married, — the mature, grave, laborious, ambitious man to the young girl whose physical nature only was complete, while her faculties of mind and heart had never been called into life. Whatever of scope and knowledge I may have since attained, I owe it *all* to the patient, love-directed education of the late Baron Waldeyer, who, though he may seem to you to have defied the first principles of social morality, ever was and ever will remain to me the best type of a pure-hearted, noble-minded man. Mr. Dysart must from the first have felt that the tie between us was no more than a legal obligation, redeemed and beautified by no harmonies of thought or feeling, and as this sense slowly grew upon me, it led me to desperate thoughts and deeds. I blame him, with his knowledge of life and character, that he could ever have consented thus to defraud a young and ardent nature; and I pity him as well, for, except for my act, which sundered this unhappy tie, he would have closed upon himself forever all prospect, all chance, of the domestic affection and happiness which belonged to his years.

"We had been married but a month when his mining plans seemed to be crowned with a great success. His excavations reached a large body of the richest ore. For a few days the vision of great wealth was before us, when an unlucky blast broke into a subterranean water-channel, and in a few hours the whole mine was completely flooded. The whole of my father's capital, and nearly all his own, had already been expended, and this catastrophe meant ruin for us all. Mr. Dysart at once determined to go to England, raise a large sum on the security of the mine, and buy and forward the best pumping machinery. My father put into his hands all the records and titles to the property. He delayed a few months, to start an adit in the valley which he hoped might drain a portion of the mine, and then he started, taking me with him. Four months after our arrival in England Helen was born, and one month before her birth we received intelligence of the death of my father by a cruel accident in the mine. Mr. Dysart was constantly absent in Wales, in Cornwall, in Scotland, — wherever he might study the latest improvements in mining and machinery. He had planned to be with me at my confinement, but it was a little premature and occurred in his absence. Thanks to my youth and the excellent medical care provided, I recovered my physical health perfectly; but the shock of my father's horrible death, the isolation of a strange land, and above all the exact and cold duty which governed all Mr. Dysart's relations to me, his long absences and absorption in business, so wrought into my young mind the sense of a solitary and loveless life that I fell

— as I believe would now be conceded by all medical men — into one of those monomanias which are as a strand of insanity in an otherwise rational nature. At any rate, my whole being was filled with an intense aversion to my husband; even his child, beautiful baby as she was, I did not love. This was certainly a morbid, unnatural state of mind, and yet the reserve of an intense nature enabled me to control in great part the manifestation of it, and to suffer only so much to appear as was attributed to my general waywardness.

"A fortnight after the birth of my child Mr. Dysart left me for a long series of business expeditions, and I fell into the way of visiting the various museums of paintings. Naturally my acquaintance was mostly with the French and Spanish in London, for I was more familiar with both of these languages than with English even. At the National Academy I first met the Baron Waldeyer and also the Count de Zarzuela. Both were interested in me, I in the baron only. The count came sometimes at first to call upon me, the baron never; but we often met at the galleries. In a few weeks he had my whole confidence, my whole heart, my whole history. I began to copy a picture of Paul Veronese to furnish a reason for my frequent visits, and he habitually met me when I left the building, and attended my homeward walk to within a few squares of my house. He was careful not to compromise me in any way, but his gentleness and his enthusiasm in his views upon social questions revealed a new life to me; and all the promise of those days has been fulfilled day by day for twenty-seven

years. It could not be said that he tempted me from my home: it was rather I who was determined to desert it, determined to possess and enjoy that sympathy which comprehended and valued every movement of my nature. So it was arranged that I should join him in Brussels, and that we should go thence to a quiet town in the north of Spain.

"One day I left my house at the hour at which I was accustomed to go to the gallery, and before noon was on my way across the Channel. I left a note for Mr. Dysart, where I knew it would some day be found. That note you may have seen?"

"I remember it well," said Mrs. Dysart.

"Then, perhaps, you will recognize this copy, which I have brought with me to verify my statements"; and the baroness handed her a little sheet, traced in faded characters, which Mrs. Dysart eagerly read.

"Adrian, adieu! For good or for ill, I am leaving you forever. Wedded life, for us both, has been an unending and undiminishing sacrifice. For the sake of the years which are before each of us, I must take this step. Our burdens are similar, but they are not equal, for the love which my nature demands is an episode in man's life, but is the substance of woman's. Let me seek it where I may, — let me go! Do not look for me, — do not seek to fetter your life again with the chain which I thus break. No stain, no reproach, shall rest upon you. I charge you with no unkindness of word or deed. Thus far you have been careful, liberal, generous toward me, and I have been obedient and

submissive toward you. But, O Adrian, there never was, there never can be, any love between us. Why should we wear its chain? My name, my child, my fortune, — I leave them all: there is no other choice for me. If time shall ever show that what the Church and the World unite to call a wrong is Nature's substantial truth, and carries with it Nature's blessing for both of us, you will hear from me again. Meantime the law gives to the man, who has been thus abandoned, release from the tie which I now and forever renounce. I, I alone, am the outlaw, and the social penalties of the outlaw I must bear.

"God bless you, Adrian! and, when time has healed this scar, give to you some fair, good woman, who shall be the wife of your mind, of your heart, and your pride. My brain swims and fire dances before my eyes as I write this, but in my heart I know only sorrow and kindness for you.

"MANUELA."

In spite of herself, Mrs. Dysart was touched by this note, which bore date, "London, July 12, 1849." She folded it and returned it to the baroness, saying, "Yes, it is the same; and your story is but another version of circumstances of which I already knew the greater part."

The baroness resumed. "You will believe me, madame, that I have not forced this story upon your attention for any other reason than that which belongs to a widowed mother, bereaved of a child, to regain whom she would give anything in life. I do not under-

rate my difficulties. The strength of possession, the shield of all the world's conventions, is with you. It becomes me, therefore, just now to be silent, except you wish me to speak. Whatever else you wish to learn shall be told you, justly and truly."

And then there was silence. The attitude, the relations, of the parties were so strange that Mrs. Dysart could not at once collect her thoughts and command a clear judgment. At length she said, "Madame Waldeyer will understand that many questions will suggest themselves to me which I hesitate to ask. I have to guard the feelings and the interests of a family; I have to defend my own weak health against the shock of knowledge which is painful to me, and profitless; and I have also to consider the feelings of one who, whatever may be her purpose, and whatever the judgment which I may finally put upon her, seems at present to seek to disarm resentment by a gentle and considerate manner. Still, I cannot forbear asking some questions, which you can answer or not, as you please. But be careful, madame! You have roused my mind to very unwonted activity, and I will not pledge myself as to the use I may make of what I learn.

"In the first place, then, why have you allowed us so long to believe that you eloped with the Count de Zarzuela, and that you were drowned with him, three days after, off the coast of Spain? And why have you withheld from us the knowledge of your existence for more than twenty-five years?"

The baroness smiled. "That I can readily answer.

The Baron Waldeyer was a very peculiar man. From the first, he intended that I should feel, as he appeared to do, that happiness and devotion to each other gave the highest sanction to our relation, which he strove to dignify and refine in every way. We were not the victims of a sudden and transient attraction. Such as grew up between us was matured in the light of his intensely thoughtful and poetic nature. If the step which I took was an error, he took care that I should know fully what I was doing. He set before me fairly all the consequences it would involve. He even bade me remember that, as a matter of history, ties thus formed, usually had a sad and disastrous ending. More than all things else he seemed to fear that it should fade or fail or suffer any interruption. He taught me that love could only survive in harmony of opinion, in sacrifice of personal feeling, in respect for each other's character and motives. He would not have permitted — in fact, neither of us would have been capable of starting or circulating the story of the Count de Zarzuela. It was not even known to us until long afterward that rumor connected my name and fate with his, or that we learned definitely the circumstances of his death. Some domestic event in his family required his immediate return to Spain. He left on the same day that I did, taking with him a French nurse, who, in answer to a telegram, had been sent on from Paris and joined him at Southhampton, an hour before he sailed, on a yacht which had been expressly chartered for him. Three days later this yacht was run down in the night by a sailing vessel,

and sunk off the coast of Biscay. When we learned the rumor, which had perhaps shielded us from pursuit, and for which we were in no way responsible, we did not think it needful to contradict it, as it concerned only the dead. We knew that Mr. Dysart had married again, believing himself a widower, and that the revelation now would cause endless trouble to him and ourselves. In the current opinion I was a Spanish lady whom the baron had married. We had spent a month in Malaga after leaving Brussels, and thence went to Salonica in Turkey, where we lived three years, until we were quite forgotten in England. The baron had visited England after the death of his widowed mother, and had left his brother for education in an English school at Lausanne, so that there was absolutely no one to question our acts or motives. His unfailing love and sympathy left me little to wish. It was my great treasure, not to be imperilled by any vain curiosity. But I had always yearned after my child, and since the death of my husband, two years ago, it has seemed in my desolation and hunger of the heart, as though I could not live without her. And now, perhaps, you can guess whence came yearly Helen's Christmas box since she was ten years old. Every year I have remitted to an agent in New York a thousand francs, and every year have received from him a list of the contents and the receipt every year of a different express company employed to deliver them at your house. Here is the latest, dated December 24, 1875."

"The annual mystery of our house," said Mrs. Dy-

sart; "but we never looked beyond the sea for its source, as the gifts were all evidently bought in New York. Now will you tell me how it is that you have found us here in Switzerland, and have chosen this time and place for your purpose?"

The baroness resumed: "It has been my purpose — if I may use your word — to move in this matter as soon and as directly as I might; and when I learned from New York that you were to be in Switzerland for the months of July and August, I came early, hoping to meet you somewhere. Our first stage was Lucerne, and there we happened to find your names upon the register of the hotel. The rest must be clear to you."

"You say," said Mrs. Dysart, "that you learned from New York."

"Yes," responded Madame Waldeyer; "my agent, Mr. Fayrolle, has called upon Mr. Dysart."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Dysart, "now I understand Julia's letter."

"Yes," said the baroness; "he at least knows of my existence, and something of my wishes, — less, however, than you now know."

"Still," said Mrs. Dysart, "I must beg that you will explain them further and more definitely."

The baroness hesitated, but added, "My dear madame, do not ask me to say more now. Would it not be well that you should first know me a little better, and that each should recognize the fact that in Helen we have a common object of interest and affection? It may be that you will yet accept from me the heart-

felt love and duty which I owe to the woman who has righted the wrong my act involved; who has surrounded my child from her cradle with a true mother's love and care; who has formed in her a person and a mind fit for any destiny. There is no one in all this world to whom at this moment I owe so much as to you!" The baroness rose, with quick impulse and streaming eyes, knelt at Mrs. Dysart's feet, clasped her hand, and, bowing her gray head upon it, kissed it and was silent.

Mrs. Dysart regarded her with mixed emotion, but she did not withdraw her hand. She laid her other gently on the still fair, round shoulder of the sobbing woman, as she said, "Dear Madame Waldeyer, it is impossible not to feel for you, whether I can feel with you or not. You prove so altogether different from anything which I could have supposed that Manuela Parédes could become."

The baroness rose and steadied herself, as if to reassume her wonted self-control; but the effort was vain, she tottered to her chair and sank back into it. At length she rose, and, hesitating, with a blush and smile, said, "After such proof of weakness, Mrs. Dysart at least will not find anything formidable in me. We have so much to think of that solitude will be good for us both. Adieu, madame, and thank you for your kind attention and regard." She turned at the door, bowed gracefully, and went out.

It was ten o'clock when the baroness reached her apartment and found the baron awaiting her. He scanned her face carefully as she entered.

"How goes it, Manuela?" said he.

The baroness dropped wearily into her chair, and folded her hands in her lap. "Indeed, I cannot tell, Adolphe. I hope not badly. Madame Dysart is not so difficult as I feared. She seems to have both sense and feeling."

"What did you fear?" said the baron.

"I feared that she would be either rude or hysterical, — that she would be so distracted and upset that one could make no sure progress with her, or that she would give me no fair opportunity to show my meaning and the strength of the case. Instead of which she heard me patiently; she attempted no reproaches; she was reserved, it is true, deliberate and careful, but she seemed to comprehend and respect my feelings and position."

"And you told her —"

"Almost everything. There was no mention made of you, however, mon cher"; and she smiled, a sweet but sorrowful smile.

"And the young lady, — Helen? Does she know her true relation to the family?"

"I did not ask, and she said nothing about it. I think not, however."

"Was anything said of that gentleman, — the American who is with the party?"

"Nothing."

"Did any items of the young lady's history appear?"

"Nothing. In fact, Adolphe, I could do no more at one hearing than to convince Madame Dysart of my

identity, and to attempt to propitiate her interest and sympathy. I can only hope I may have left as favorable an impression on her mind as she has on mine. But I see that at every stage I shall have to force my way to a hearing. Aggressive all the time, — oh, how hard!"

"Did you not appoint another interview?"

"No, Adolphe. In fact, I left in confusion. It was very sad and strange for me to sue to a stranger, and to feel that she regarded me as a sinful woman, a dangerous adventuress, and to perceive that she knew and would believe no good of Alexandre. Loved and honored as I have been, it was very hard to be put on my defence, and to have to prove my claim to common propriety of feeling and behavior. No one who has not been in such a case can tell how strong are the forces which confront a woman who has dared to live her own life in the world. I have been a pariah in their eyes for years. Can I ever be anything better? Go, now, Adolphe. I am so very tired that I must neither talk nor think any more just now."

It was very late that night before either of these two women slept.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALLS OF THE HANDECK.

WHEN ladies are concerned in Alpine excursions, so much depends on weather, that Robert deferred the programme of the next day until morning. He sent this card up to the ladies at 6 A. M.: — "Breakfast at 7. Two hours on horseback, then six hours' walk. All luggage will be sent by mule, and will be accessible at any time. Short and light dresses are in order."

At a quarter past six the party had gathered on the piazza and were waiting for Robert to come to breakfast. "What a life you must lead with that brother of yours!" said Alice to Walter, teasingly. "He issues his orders as though he were at least a major-general. Helen and I are in the habit of having our little say about things in general, and it seems very odd to be under such rigid discipline. There he is, standing against that pillar at the end. Come, let's all parade before him, like a corporal's guard. Take your alpenstocks for guns. Shoulder — arms!" She began to sing La Parisienne: —

"'En avant! Marchons
Contre leur canons,
Travers le feu, — le fer de battaillons.'

Forward — march!" And with steps accenting the lively air, all except Helen filed in front of Robert.

He appreciated the joke, and, hat in hand, with a grand air, bowed like a general at a review.

Alice, struggling with her laughter, cried, "Oh! if you could only see how perfectly absurd you look!"

"I dare say, my child," said Robert; "but something must be done to keep you in countenance."

"'My child'? Upon my word!" cried Alice. "I shall run"; and, suiting the action to the word, she sprang from the piazza. Walter followed, and they went racing down the road. Presently they were seen returning, arm in arm, and grave as judges; and, this little escapade over, the party went in to breakfast.

"That will do for the morning," said Robert. "You won't feel like frolicking to-night when you get into Meiringen, all draggled and collapsed."

"What is there to draggle, I should like to know?" said Alice, shaking her short skirt.

"Your shoulders and your eyelids, pretty maid," said he. "You will know something about a fatigue-party by sundown."

"Where shall we be to-morrow?" asked Helen.

"Oh, to-morrow will be easy," Robert answered; "all carriage and steamboat, except one little scramble up the Giesbach, and that you can do in a *chaise à porteur*, if you like."

"That is something I had resolved *not* to do," said Helen. "It may suit Europeans, — but the idea of men carrying such a human load is not American or

democratic. It is all the worse that they are so ready to do it for money."

"I like your feeling," said Robert, "and yet I can imagine circumstances in which I should be very glad to put you into a chair. It is a safe and easy method for invalids."

"What alarming forethought!" said Helen.

"That is nothing," he answered. "You can't imagine how careful and prudent I resolved to be when your mother consented to let you go with me on this excursion. How could I face her if you returned ill or worn out? I should have to answer to the baroness too, who looked yesterday as if she thought you were above all price. Do you know, I could not help thinking there was a strong likeness between you?"

"Thank you, Mr. Audran, even for comparing me to a woman of sixty; for any one might be proud to be as graceful and engaging as she. I cannot help thinking of her, and wishing that I knew more of her history."

"She has one, you may be sure," said Robert. "Such strong impulses and such habitual self-control are only harmonized by discipline. She is certainly a remarkable character."

"Yes, I think so," said Helen. "There was something absolutely magnetic and thrilling about her yesterday to me. And I like the baron, too; he seemed so loyal and attentive to his sister."

"He is a very pleasant and chivalric person, I believe," said Robert, "but if I am to continue of that opinion, you must not praise him too much."

"You said something to me yesterday, Mr. Audran, about being troublesome; and now you instruct me in the methods of self-defence."

"The 'womanly art of self-defence,'" said Robert. "I am sure it is needless."

"Doubtless, at present," said Helen, piqued at the turn which the conversation was taking.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Dysart. Your satire is the last thing which I would invoke."

"It would be a poor return, Mr. Audran, for your kindness to all of us."

"What kind of quarrel is this, I wonder?" said Alice, roguishly.

They were soon mounted and climbing the slope which rises precipitously behind the hotel. The mountain-side, facing south, almost two thousand feet high, is protected from both the north and east winds, and lies open to the sun for three quarters of the day. It is clothed with the richest Alpine verdure, and is famed for its rhododendrons, azaleas, and heather-bloom. They give it its name, — the Maienwand, or Wall of May.

The bridle-path zigzags back and forth along the slope, which is too steep to be scaled by direct approach. The morning was beautiful, as only a morning in early summer can be. A party of ten were just before them, with their complement of guides, the two together making a long cavalcade, winding upward. The incense of fields of bloom, distilling in the bright sunshine, the gay scarfs and dresses of the riders flut-

tering in the morning wind, the hum of bees, the tinkle of many cow-bells, the calls from rank to rank of the procession, the cawing of the ravens which circled round their heads, and then, on balanced and glistening wings, went sliding down into the deep valley below, made the solitude vocal with the fulness of life, in contrast with the cold glacier on the east and the bare, brown rocks on the south. Far below, along the course of the infant Rhone, ran the road, with here and there a tourist's carriage, or foot-travellers, like motes in the distance. Near the summit, Robert halted his party for a little, to make division between it and that which preceded it; and they watched them as one by one they reached the top, and disappeared on the other side of the crest, each figure strongly relieved against the white northern sky; then they in turn passed the ridge, and at once the scene changed. All verdure disappeared; around them were masses of dark, unsunned rock, rising from rifts of snow; to the right and left snowy peaks clustered; and right beneath them, in inky blackness, lay a small mountain-tarn, the Todtensee, once choked with the bodies of the dead, when French and Austrian fought amid the snows for the command of the pass. Still further on a dreary basin in the hills inclosed the Hospice of the Grimsel, at the point where one or two glacier-streams enter a small, rock-bound lake, and the Aar, from this dismal source, foams through its narrow bed between overhanging mountains, for nearly thirty miles, to the Lake of Brienz. This is the Haslithal, in its upper

portion one of the wildest, and in its lower, one of the most beautiful of Alpine valleys. Down this valley their day's journey lay before them. They reached the hospice about ten o'clock, and from thence sent back one of the guides with four of their horses, retaining a single horse and guide to carry the luggage and the wraps, of which they now divested themselves in anticipation of a long walk.

As they passed through a gateway of rock a little below the hospice, Robert pointed out that it had once been continuous across the narrow valley, and, like a great dam, had made a mountain lake of the entire basin in which the hospice stands. One after another such exhausted lake-basins were traversed, each somewhat ampler than the preceding. High on the rocky walls were the furrows of glaciers, and the ripple-marks where the waves of centuries had fretted the rocks. Some of the lake-beds were paved with gray gravel, close packed and destitute of verdure; some were covered with scanty green; but through them all the rushing stream ploughed its headlong course. As they continued to descend, the heath gave way to shrubs, the shrubs to bushes, and the bushes to thickets of alder and birch.

About half-past two o'clock, after an easy descending walk of eight miles, they arrived at the Châlet of Handeck, where the Aar, now become a small river, makes a plunge of two hundred and fifty feet, falling into a basin of jagged rocks below. Beneath the pine-trees which overhung the châlet, they took their noon-day

rest; and Helen began a sketch of the valley, including the mountain wall of the opposite side, and the cascades of Aerlen and Gelmer, which flow from the glaciers above, leaping in silver threads or clouds of spray from shelf to shelf, to join the larger river before it makes its fearful plunge. In the middle ground was the gate of rock, from which the compressed waters rush to spring in an unbroken sheet into the cauldron below, and the remains of a mist-enveloped and rainbow-spanned foot-bridge which crosses the outlet of the basin. She drew with great freedom and force, and Robert, who watched each stroke, when it was done wrote beneath a verse of Mignon's song: —

> "Knowst thou the hill, the bridge that hangs on cloud?
> The mules in mist grope o'er the torrent loud,
> In caves lie coiled the dragon's ancient brood,
> The crag leaps down, and over it the flood."

"Now we must be getting on," he said; and he moved away in search of the rest of the party, whose voices were audible a little way up the stream, while Helen went forward alone, meaning to stop a few moments at the bridge below.

It was rather a wreck than a bridge, she found, for a late flood had carried away all the string-pieces but one, to which a light hand-rail was attached. She hesitated a moment; but the timber seemed broad enough for a firm foothold, and the rail stanch, so she ventured to walk a few feet out, in order to get a fair view of the falling waters. Meantime Robert joined the rest of the party, who had found upon the hillside a log, perhaps

ten or twelve feet long, from which the branches had been trimmed, and they were now rolling it down, to launch it on the stream below, and see its leap over the cataract. They promised to follow so soon as this should be done, and he hastened to rejoin Helen. When he reached the châlet she was not there. Looking down the path, he saw her standing on the frail bridge in a cloud of spray. With one flash of thought he realized that the log must be already afloat, and that in another moment it would be hurled from the edge of the precipice and might strike the timber on which she stood. He rushed forward, shouting as he ran; but the roar of the falling water drowned his voice, so that Helen did not catch the words. He reached the table of rock above the end of the beam and called to her, "Come back! Be quick!" She looked up in surprise, — he saw her start; for one bewildered instant she stood hesitating, and in that instant the end of the log came into view, shooting far beyond the falling water. Robert dropped upon his knees, and called frantically, "Spring! Quick!"

It was too late; the log, swifter than she, shot in a long curve into the gulf. It struck on end, whirled over, and fell heavily across the bridge-timber. Helen saw it coming, and knew that it was doom. But one yard divided her from Robert's outstretched arms. She sprang into them; and even as his hands tightened round her wrists, the plank beneath her feet swept into the seething pool below, and she swung in air, held by Robert as he lay prone on the rock, his arms reach-

ing over the brink. Fortunately the guide had heard his call, and now came running to the spot. He grasped her upraised arms, and supported her until Robert could rise, when the two lifted her up to the table of rock beneath which the timber had rested.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Robert, as they sank upon the ground. "You are not hurt, Helen?" seeing that she was very pale.

"I think not, thank you, — but oh, what an escape! I owe my life to you!" And she looked with all the light of her deep brown eyes into his.

"Do you, dear?" said Robert, scarcely knowing what he said; and he stroked back her falling hair with both his hands.

She rose to brush the yellow sand from her dress, and with the motion exclaimed, "Oh, my arm!" It hung helpless, — she could not bring it to her side; and, faint with pain, she sank into her seat again.

The rest of the party now came running up, and Alice cried, "What is it? Oh, what is it? What has happened? Tell me!"

Helen smiled as she glanced from Alice to Robert, and said, "Mr. Audran has saved my life — and broken my arm."

"Oh, dear me!" said Alice, "what did you do that for, Mr. Audran?"

"Supposing we find out first what are the facts in this case," said Robert; and, placing one hand carefully under Helen's left elbow, he passed the fingers of the other upward to her shoulder. Just below the point

of the shoulder he found a marked depression, and beneath the collar-bone in front a rounded swelling.

"Miss Dysart's arm is not broken," said he, "but her shoulder is out of joint."

"Oh, but that is dreadful!" said Alice. "What can we do?"

"We shall do very well, I dare say," said Helen cheerily.

Robert hesitated and looked perplexed for a moment. Then he said, "Miss Dysart, there is no surgical aid nearer than Meiringen, ten or twelve miles away. With every hour of delay your arm will become more swollen, and reducing the dislocation a more painful and difficult business. I think I know enough to set and dress it; and if so, the consequences of this accident will not be at all serious. I have often been the rounds with surgeons in hospital; and out on the plains I have had to take care of myself, my men, and my neighbors."

"Do try, then," said Helen; "and tell me what I am to do."

"First, then, let Miss Alice get your dress off from this arm and shoulder"; and, giving his knife to Alice, he added, "You will best know which seams to cut, so as to leave the whole arm and shoulder uncovered. I will do everything else." From his bag he brought a case which for years had been part of his travelling outfit, and with it a girth, taken from the saddle of the horse. "I must give you chloroform," said he.

"Oh, no," said Helen; "I can bear any necessary pain."

"It is not merely to save you pain; it is to relax all the muscles, and make the operation and the injury as slight as may be."

"Very well," said Helen. "Am I to sit up?"

"No," said Robert; "we will make a couch for you."

He laid some folded shawls on the grass, rolled another for a pillow, and with a third covered her limbs. Alice was bidden to hold her hands. Robert placed his handkerchief, wet with chloroform, in his hat, slowly brought it near her nostrils, and bade her breathe full and long, without fear. She passed quietly under the influence, Robert counting her pulse and respirations the while. When she approached unconsciousness he lifted the unhurt arm and let it fall: it dropped heavily by her side. Then he gave the chloroform to Walter, bidding him be careful not to cover her face with it; turned back the ripped dress, and uncovered her neck and shoulder, round and firm and fair as ivory; stretched out her arm at right angles to her body, bade the guide draw it outward and upward while he grasped the head of the bone, which lay like a round ball among the muscles of the chest; and then, with an oscillating movement, forced it down into the hollow of the armpit. Next he bade Walter, after giving her a little more chloroform, to pass the saddle-girth in a loop under the armpit, and draw steadily outward and upward, while he took the arm from the guide, grasping it firmly above the elbow, and, rolling it slowly in his hands, brought it down against her side. The loop in Walter's hands yielded suddenly, and the head of the bone slipped into

its socket without any force. The arm could now be moved in any direction, and the depression beneath the shoulder had disappeared.

Alice, who had watched with contracted brow every step of this mysterious process, saw the look of care dissolve in Robert's face, and heard the long-drawn breath of relief which marked the success of the operation. She bent and kissed Helen again and again, then she pulled Robert down and kissed him also, and then she buried her face in the folds of Helen's dress and began to cry. The boys were ready to dance with delight, only Robert was calm. He pinned the cut dress together, and seeing Helen's collar-stud on the ground beside her, quietly put it in his own pocket. Then he called, "Come, Miss Alice, get your needle and thread, and run up this sleeve."

Alice obeyed, and had nearly finished when Helen opened her eyes and slowly said, "Is it all done?"

"All done," said Robert; and he sent the guide for a cup of water.

"Did you feel all that dreadful pulling and pushing?" said Alice.

"Not a bit, dear," said Helen.

"Very well, then, Mr. Audran is a great surgeon, that is all I have to say; and I have kissed him for it, and I think you should do so too."

Helen looked in a dreamy, bewildered way from one to the other. "Not — without — leave, do you think?" she said, with a little gleam of fun.

Robert bowed his head, she lifted hers and softly kissed his cheek.

"That 's right, — a very nice little fee," said Alice complacently. "Can you sit up?"

Helen raised herself, and Robert with a long scarf so confined and supported her arm and shoulder as to secure perfect rest and ease.

"What next?" said Alice. "How are we to get out of this?"

"She will look very different in half an hour," said Robert, "and we shall get to Imhof or Meiringen quite comfortably."

"I feel as though I could walk now," said Helen.

"There is no need of walking," said Robert. "Last night I telegraphed from the Rhone glacier to have two saddle-horses and a chair sent up from Meiringen to meet us. They were to leave at eleven, so they cannot be far away now. Does your shoulder pain you, Miss Dysart?"

"Very little," replied Helen; "but my head swims a good deal after the chloroform. I hope I have not said or done anything very bad; have I, Alice?"

"Everything that you should, and nothing that you should n't, as usual. Eh, Mr. Audran?"

"All that I can say about it," said Robert, "is that Miss Dysart has done just as I believed she would in any great danger or emergency. If she had been hysterical or fantastic in any way, she would not be sitting here, safe and happy; and what would then have become of us? Miss Alice, I do not think that even now you know what has happened"; and he told her of that "vision of sudden death," and the one hazardous moment on which all had depended.

"And she hung by her arms over that awful gulf!" said Alice. "How horrible! What did you think about, Helen?"

"Nothing. I saw only Mr. Audran's terrified face, and the dark pines above. I heard the waters dash, I felt a gripe like iron on my arms, but I thought of nothing until they were just drawing me in over the edge of the cliff, and then I knew that I was not to die, and you were not to suffer. Oh! how are we to thank you enough, Mr. Audran?"

"That is one of the things that no fellow can find out, as Dundreary remarks," said Eugene. "I can only say he has earned the everlasting gratitude of our family, and that I don't know anybody else in the world who would have been capable of doing what he has done."

"Go away, please, all of you," said Helen in a broken voice. "Leave Alice with me. I am dizzy, and perhaps could sleep a little."

"Go down the road, boys," said Robert, "until you meet the horses, and hurry them up. I will stay near the ladies, and the guide will stay with us."

By and by Alice saw him quite a distance down the hill, cutting green twigs by the handful.

"Let me get up," said Helen, "and see what is left of me. Is my dress torn to pieces?"

"I don't see anything wrong," said Alice. "Two buttons gone from your waist, and a little dust on the front of your skirt, — that is all. Everything else is perfectly in order, but, O Nelly, what a fright we have had! As Eugene says, is there anybody else in the world but

Mr. Audran who would have brought us out of this scrape so wonderfully? If you don't make it all right with him I shall have a very poor opinion of you."

"What do you mean?" said Helen sharply.

"I mean," said the dauntless Alice, "that chance and circumstances have brought you so close together that you ought always to belong to each other. There never was a man who suited you so well, there never will be a woman who could satisfy him so perfectly."

"Pray, let him find it out for himself, then," said Helen. "Don't keep forcing us on each other. It is you who will drive him away, you foolish girl."

"He adores you, Helen."

"Very well, let him say so then, when and where he pleases. I know he likes me, and I know I like him, but there are a thousand things to be thought of besides liking. I don't intend that he shall be sacrificed to his kindness in taking care of us, whatever becomes of me"; and she gave a little shiver.

"Well," said Alice, "all I can say is that it will be an everlasting pity if you two don't find out that you were made for each other."

"Come, dust me and make me fit to be seen," cried Helen impatiently. "Am I all right now? Let's walk down to meet him."

Alice adjusted her hair and hat, and brushed down her dress with a few quick strokes, and they started off. Helen walked with a strong, firm step, and but for her bandaged arm and pale cheeks no one would have guessed that anything had befallen her.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RISING TIDE.

AS the ladies drew near the thicket where Robert was still cutting boughs, Helen called, in her clear, fresh voice, "Come, sir! We can't afford to leave you behind."

"Oh! there you are, sure enough," said he, coming out, with a fagot of green twigs in his hands. "You look, I think, even better for your moment of suspense."

"Yes," said she; "those who are born to be hanged won't be drowned, you know; and will you please tell me what all those twigs are for?"

"They are for you," said Robert, — "something good for bruises. We will have a decoction made to-night, at Meiringen, and put it on your shoulder."

"What am I to expect about my arm?" said Helen.

"It will be swollen and tender to-morrow, but less so with each day, I hope," said Robert. "Perhaps you will feel it a week hence, perhaps not; and it may be that, as you grow old, it will occasionally remind you of the Falls of the Handeck."

"You complimented my memory this morning, Mr. Audran, and I don't think it is so shallow that I shall

need a twinge in the shoulder to remind me of one of the great events of my life. It might have been, a few hours ago, that all this idyl of the Alps should dissolve and be only a memory; but now, wherever you go and wherever I live, you must come to us whenever you can, and you must not cheat me of the chance to render you any service which may be in my power."

"It will give *me* pleasure, also, to meet Mr. Audran, — on all proper occasions," lisped Alice.

"Well, I hope," said Robert, "that this awkward accident won't end our excursions. I had thought of so many more which perhaps we might make together. If it were not that your mother is expecting you at Interlaken, I should propose to go from Meiringen, by the Rosenlaui Glacier and Scheideck, over to Grindelwald; and the next day up the Grindelwald Glacier; and the third day over the Wengern Alp to Lauterbrunnen; and the fourth day to Murren and the Schmadribach, — and so to Interlaken. That would be, for ladies, doing the Bernese Alps pretty thoroughly. Instead of which you will now have to stay some days at Interlaken."

"We must go to mamma, certainly," said Helen; "but, Mr. Audran, could I make any part of that trip in a chair, if I were not up to walking?"

"You perceive that chairs are not to be despised, in an emergency. I hope you may; but you should consult a surgeon when we get to Interlaken, and he will decide."

"I don't believe that any surgeon could have done more than you did, Mr. Audran," said Alice.

"I don't know that," said he. "I am very proud of my exploit, and, now that I have succeeded, am glad that I did not hesitate to attempt it. I did hesitate; but I could not bear to think that you must go twenty-four hours without assistance, and that your arm should become inflamed and the reduction painful and uncertain as it always is when delayed. I would not have touched it had I thought I should make it worse by the attempt, in case I did not succeed. As it was, I suppose a surgeon would say that it was one of the easiest dislocations to reduce. I have seen it done several times, and once before succeeded in it myself. Last year one of my herders was thrown from his horse, and struck on the point of his shoulder. He was a poltroon, and made me lots of trouble, so of course it was neither so quickly nor so well over as now. Hark! Did n't you hear the boys calling? Yes, they have met the horses. Won't you sit down and wait for them? We shall get through in fair season, I think."

"As you please," said Helen, "but it does not hurt me to walk."

In a few moments the horses appeared. Helen was placed in the chair, Alice mounted one horse and Eugene the other, and the party fared briskly forward through the pine groves and the willows which were scattered along the downward route. Thus they passed through the meadows of Guttanen, bright with the pink and yellow blossoms of the meadow saffron crouching beneath spreading umbels of rue, and climbed the rocky barrier which was once a dike and made a lake

of that peaceful valley. They had ridden two hours when Eugene insisted on dismounting and giving his horse to Robert; and Helen proposed that Alice should try the chair awhile and let her ride. The sun went down red in the west, and the stars, one by one, stole out, as they steadily pressed on through meadow and grove, the dashing Aar always at their feet, and the road smooth enough, but always descending.

They had ridden for a long time without words, when Helen said, "Why are you so silent, Mr. Audran?"

"I was thinking," said he, "what an unspeakable sorrow and pain would have been mine if I were travelling this dark road, carrying you home to your mother, dead. I suppose I should have survived it, but it would have been a shadow on my life which man or woman or time would never have lifted. What a dreadful ending to all the charm which, since that first meeting on the Rigi, you have thrown over my life! You don't know, Helen, — you whose life is passed in the inspiration and confidence of friendship and love, — what an oasis in the desert of my solitary existence this face-to-face and hand-to-hand companionship with such a woman as you are has been."

"Why are you so solitary, Mr. Audran? Why should one who might contribute so much to society withdraw himself from it? There are many women like myself, many better far than I, who wait, wait wearily, for the coming of such men as you into their social world."

"I but submit to the inevitable. At thirty, when Friedrich and Simon in Heidelberg told me that the

bar, the library, and even the life of towns and men, were not for me, — that I must live, if I would live at all, in the open air and in comparative seclusion (it seems now that it was a needless sacrifice, but then I felt it to be imperative), I determined to seek my fortune where I might have part in the building up of a State, and where any desultory powers and knowledge which I possessed might turn in some way to the service of a people who certainly need among them a leaven of other life than such as now grows naturally out of their soil. If my fortunes ever give me liberty to do so, I may yet turn life to some good account. But I know what I have missed; and when a pleasure such as this slides into my lonely way, it has a wonderful sweetness both in its passing and in its memory. Does it offend you that I speak as I feel? Will you let me talk thus to you, Helen?"

She smiled. "I have no choice. We are alone: what you say, I must hear."

"Does it not please you to hear, Helen?"

"Yes, it does. Though 'but a shadow, but a sliding,' I prize this glimpse into your inner life. I see so much to admire, and hour after hour you place me so deeply in your debt, that I shall have to do one of two things: I must withdraw from your company, or I must think as you think and say as you say."

"O Helen, you are so sure of yourself that you can speak as few women can, as none ever did, to me."

"I ought to understand myself. I am almost thirty. I have had the best and happiest home you can imagine.

The authority of my parents was never anything more than the weight of their better reason, the obligations laid upon me only enough to teach me the sense of responsibility; and all my privileges and opportunities were measured, not by my deserts, but by their kindness. I have never had anything to fear but the loss of my own self-respect and the confidence of my friends; and now it seems to me as though I were making a very prominent addition to that number. You are — I see it — to be a power, an influence, with me for I do not know how long. Does it please you to be numbered with those who are a light to my feet and a lamp to my path?"

"It does please me," said Robert solemnly; "and God grant I may never mislead those gentle feet! There are the lights of Imhof yonder. I had thought we would stop there, but we will go on to Meiringen if you like."

"I will do just as you say," answered Helen, "but if you leave it to me, we will stop at Imhof. First thoughts are best."

"Imhof it shall be, then," said he; and he wondered if Helen had any idea whither his first thoughts would have led him all that day.

Before she was ready for sleep a servant brought to her room a pitcher of warm, dark fluid, and this line: —

"It does not smell nice, but if you will dip a napkin in it and swathe your shoulder for the night, it may save you some soreness in the morning.

"R. A."

While her children were passing this eventful day, Mrs. Dysart was alone in her chamber at Interlaken. Not until morning began to grow gray had she been able to sleep, and when sleep came at length, it continued far into the day. It was eleven o'clock before she rang for her breakfast, and, when that was ended, she seated herself to write to her husband and daughter the history which the previous evening had revealed. It was no easy task to give a sketch of the baroness and her methods and intentions, and after an hour spent in the attempt she had nearly come to the conclusion that it would be better not to write until she could speak from fuller knowledge of both.

The baroness, meantime, had been haunting the public portions of the hotel, in the hope of seeing Mrs. Dysart, and by two o'clock the mutual impatience of these ladies had become intolerable. The baroness, feeling that hers was the aggressive *rôle*, again assumed the initiative, and sought Mrs. Dysart in her room. She was readily admitted, and, as Mrs. Dysart advanced to meet her, each saw in the other's face the record of anxiety and suspense.

The baroness began. "I have been much in doubt whether I ought, so soon again, to intrude upon you. Had I seen you among your friends, or starting for some excursion, I should have thought it but proper to wait a suggestion of your pleasure for further conversation; but as I knew — for I took care to know — that you had not left your room since I left you in it, it seemed that I might, and perhaps I should, come and ask for you.

Do not let me interrupt you or detain you. Only let me see you, know that I did not overtax your strength or your patience, and I will wait until you indicate the time for further conversation."

"You are very considerate, madame," replied Mrs. Dysart. "It is certain that you have already disturbed my bodily rest, but not so much as you have my mind. That, however, was inevitable, and I believe that we cannot now retreat from each other. I am therefore glad to see you, and hope you will stay. There can be no better time for us to speak and hear. To-morrow my children will, I hope, return. To-day I should like to understand better what I must tell them, if, indeed, it be yet time to tell them anything."

"Yes, madame," answered the baroness, "to-day we have to ourselves. I also would know from you how I am to meet the child of my blood and your nurture. Do not think that I should ever wish her to forget what she owes to you. Though I may gain a place in her heart, her memories belong to you. For nearly thirty years you have grown into her love. I could not if I would, I would not if I could, disturb it. May I ask if Helen has always believed that you are her own mother, always and fully?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Dysart, "fully and always, — until very recently, at least, no doubt upon her relation to me has entered her mind. Within a year she may have begun to suspect that there is something which she does not fully understand. Both Mr. Dysart and myself have tried to prevent any distinction between her and the

other children; and to this day, if Helen has any idea of such, it has not been mentioned between us. When we came abroad Mr. Dysart accompanied us as far as London, and returned after a week's stay there. One day we met a gentleman who had known him many years before, and in our presence he asked for Madame Manuela. Mr. Dysart evaded an answer. There was a sense of confusion which must have struck Helen, but she never asked an explanation from us."

"Do you intend to tell her when she returns?" asked the baroness.

"That will depend upon my understanding of your own intentions. If these are to pursue what you call, and probably feel to be, your claim upon her, you are sure in some way very soon to convey your purpose to her. To prevent this would be impossible on my part; and in that case it would certainly be better for me to make the communication myself, and without the delay which would be your opportunity. Yes, I think I shall tell her."

"And I think you are right, madame. You may be sure that I should not have uncovered my life to your eyes without a well-formed purpose, from which I could hardly be put aside. You speak of methods of dealing with me, as if I were only the enemy of your house and yourself. I hope that feeling will pass. For myself, I see no occasion for it, no truth in it. I hope to be useful to all of you, hurtful to none. So long as the Baron Waldeyer lived, there was a barrier between us. But — true man and tender heart that he was! — he always

said to me that, if I outlived him, he hoped I might be able to reclaim my daughter; and in his last illness we spoke often of it. He gave the half of his fortune to me, and he said, 'You will need it to enlarge the life of your Helen, if you can attract her to you.' I do not mention this fact as an inducement, but as evidence only that I propose no injustice to his memory or his feelings. And yet, madame, while I certainly would not intimate that any such considerations could control your opinion or your actions, still, as a good mother, you cannot object that the provision made for your own children should be increased by my assuming the care of Helen's interests. And since this aspect of the matter is before us, I recall the fact that I was my father's only heir, and that, when I left London, I left behind me, in keeping of Mr. Dysart, all the fortunes which I thus inherited. Whatever they may be, whatever my present right in them, they form at least an element in the equities of the case, and I count it my good fortune that it is so. You asked me last night what my intentions were. I cannot answer more than to say that I wish to love and to serve Helen, to make her life bright and happy if I may, and to share her society, her happiness, her cares and trials, in my home or in hers, as Providence may appoint and she permit. There is but one other person in the world in whom I feel an interest, — the present Baron Waldeyer. He is more than twenty years younger than his brother. Several children of their parents, of intervening age, died in infancy or early life, and when I first knew them

these two were alone. Adolphe seemed always, to both of us, more like our child than brother, and no son could be more dutiful or considerate than he has been since his brother's death. And now, madame, have I not sufficiently revealed my thoughts to you? If not, you must tell me what more you would hear."

"Yes, Madame Waldeyer, you have spoken fully, plainly; and it is not difficult to see that you are acting less upon impulse than upon a very deliberate purpose, and that you have taken account of all the means of influence which you possess. There are certain points, however, which a woman of your intelligence cannot fail to see. One is that Helen is her own mistress, — of such an age that no parental authority, whatever its source, could control her action; and her mind is so clear and strong that she is not likely to be captivated by any sentiment of which her judgment does not approve. Your success must lie in your power over her; that we cannot resist. Until we know what that may be or may not be, it is not worth while to consider what power you can exert over any one else. I will not deny the strength of the arguments which you place before me; but I will and must say that none of them would lead me to influence her reluctant mind toward an acceptance of your wishes, even if it were in my power to do so."

"It is as you say, Madame Dysart. I shall fail if Helen does not turn to me of her own will, sooner or later; but it would be much in my favor if *you* would not reach any other conclusion before all the aspects of the matter are considered. I was Mr. Dysart's legal

wife; I was believed to be dead. Had it not been so, he would doubtless have obtained a divorce. But I am *not* dead, and he has *not* been divorced! He can be so, doubtless, through the public course of law. It will make a case in the celebrity of which all of us must share. Your position and that of your children will be defined whenever mine is. You will be married when I am divorced, not before; and your children will still remain the children of an unwedded woman. If your name and your fortune are to be undisturbed and secure, if the lustre of one of the great names of France and Spain is to be added to Helen's, you must be more than passive in my behalf; and before you commit yourself to any action, you have to consider whether Mr. Dysart would in all respects and to all extents share your prejudice. These are perhaps ungracious words, but I do not speak them because I like to do so. I told you last night that I hoped you would see that our interests are identical, not opposed; that you would believe that what I desire is indeed desirable for all concerned; and that you and I at least may unite in feeling, and bury all that is painful in the past or precarious in the future in silence and oblivion." She ceased, sitting erect and firm in her chair, and looking steadily at Mrs. Dysart, who, as this conversation had proceeded, had thrown herself backward in her chair and covered her face with her hands.

In the long silence which followed, the expression of the baroness's face changed; and when, at length, Mrs. Dysart uncovered her face, she saw no more the look of

power and purpose beneath which she had quailed, but such an expression of diffidence and sweetness that she could hardly realize this to be the same woman who, a few moments before, had gathered and twisted her heart-strings with such prevailing force. But still the baroness waited, with the air of one who would say, "I have spoken: it is your turn now." So at length Mrs. Dysart said, "Now, at least, Madame Waldeyer, you have spoken fully and in very strong words. You must give me time to review them. I shall be prepared to speak with you at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, if you will come to see me."

"That is what I should wish," said the baroness. "If there is force and reason in the position which has been stated, it will commend itself to your most deliberate judgment. I would that it might be so, and that there might never be occasion to give one moment's pain or doubt to her who has, one after the other, redeemed the pledges which I may have broken, — built and adorned again the home which I deserted. Perhaps some day you will not remember any pain I may have given you. If I might win for myself the same esteem which I feel for you, it would be something only less dear than my daughter's love.

"Before I go, madame, I am charged by the Baron Waldeyer to say that he will feel most honored if he may place his carriage at your disposal for the remainder of the day. I am sure you need the air, and respite from these thoughts that trouble."

In spite of herself Mrs. Dysart smiled as she said, "You may thank the baron for his politeness, which

I can best acknowledge by accepting it. If Mr. and Mrs. Irwin will go with me, I will send word to the office of the hotel presently."

So Mrs. Dysart had a two hours' drive with her friends in a splendidly appointed carriage, and when she returned, found upon her table a large basket of the choicest flowers and hothouse fruits, with the baron's compliments.

When Helen appeared the next morning, she was pale, and showed traces of yesterday's shock. To Robert's inquiry she answered that her shoulder was somewhat swollen and discolored; the arm stiff, but not hot or painful.

"Did it keep you awake?" said he.

"I think not," she answered; "but the chloroform seemed to have excited my brain, for I thought of everything for four hours before sleep came. The lotion cooled and soothed the shoulder, certainly."

"Cooled you all over, I should think," said Alice. "You owe more acknowledgments to your good doctor than to turn a cold shoulder only on him."

"Well," said Robert, "if she gives me one cold shoulder, she might as well give me the other: it would be inconvenient to divide."

They were early on the way, and in due time came to the lake. The young people, released from two hours' confinement in the carriage, strolled gayly about the steamboat. Helen and Robert seated themselves quietly at the stern.

She said, speaking with hesitation, "Mr. Audran, with

all the confidence there has been between us, I think I must tell you something which you certainly don't know."

His heart rose in his mouth. He thought she was going to tell him that she was pledged to another.

She continued, "There is some mystery about me. I have never been able to fathom it, — something about my birth. Somehow or other I feel as if it were drawing to a crisis. I have not been so long parted from mother for two years, and as I come toward her again I am so nervous! I shall be so glad to see her! I trust nothing has happened to her."

"You will meet in half an hour," said he; "and then I must lay down my privileges, — the right to guide your ways which she intrusted to me three days ago. Let me tell you now that I have still six weeks at my command. On the 24th of August I sail from Liverpool for New York; on the 7th of September I must be at Fountain, as my ranch is called, — an abbreviation of 'Fontaine-qui-bouillit,' the name which the old French trappers gave to the stream which runs through it down to the Arkansas River. Just there seems to have been the dividing-line of possession, for all the names south of me are Spanish, — Las Animas, Las Vegas, Pueblo, Trinidad, El-Moro; and north they are French, — Cache La Poudre, Saint Vrain, etc. My home is about twelve miles south of Colorado Springs, on the southern slope of that great ridge which slopes down from the Rocky Mountains and separates the basins of the Platte and the Ar-

kansas, — a wild and fantastic country. I will tell you sometime what manner of life we lead in it. It is, I assure you, a life of exile. Do you not think I shall have occasion to contrast these days with those which form the dull round of life for me? Until I met you I was more than content in it, — I was complacent; and now I ought to be thankful that this glimpse of social life, with all its fancies and sympathies and instincts, has been vouchsafed to me. But if ever I am to attain the fortune and the position to which I have aspired, I must turn away from them, and give to my rude life the whole force of my thought and the most constant industry of my time. Were it otherwise, Miss Dysart, I should seek to commend myself to you, — to gain, if I might, something more than a few hours of your leisure, — something more than — "

"Allow me to interrupt you, sir," said Helen. "Indeed, you do not show to advantage at this moment, for you seem to wish to protect yourself and me from any misconception of your great kindness and very valuable service, and to recover — for your own sake or for mine — something of the distance which our intimate life of the past few days has abridged. If it be for your own sake, I shall not tell you how far I wish you success; if it be for mine, I must not allow you to suppose the effort to be at all necessary. Our freedom toward each other has grown naturally out of the circumstances in which we were placed. It has given me a knowledge of a nature which will always, I am sure, command my esteem; of a power which, whenever and wherever I may come within its reach, will be genial and gracious and

good. If I have left on you in any degree a similar impression, it flatters me to believe it; and I do not hesitate to tell you that I owe you all that friendship may give or ask, — sympathy with your ambition, jealousy of your good name, joy in your success, pleasure in your presence. All of these, unbidden, you will have; and you will have nothing else which you do not ask. Now, you say you have some weeks at your command, and, if I remember one of our earlier conversations, you then said you proposed to spend it in Switzerland. We are to be here, and if your plans do not draw you elsewhere, the longer we may have something of your company, the larger will be our pleasure and profit in it. Our party is complete in itself, and *needs* no other; but beyond its needs are its privileges: while you choose to add yours to it, I do not believe we could find any addition so welcome. I speak for all. You know how Alice thinks of you, and Eugene; and I know how my mother will feel, when she knows you as we do. Here we are. Now for mother's history; it can have no events like ours."

A few moments later a carriage delivered Helen and Robert at the hotel, while the younger party went direct from the steamboat to climb the Kleine Rugen.

As they parted in the hall Robert said, "May I find the best surgeon in the place, and send him to examine your arm at half-past one? And, since the young folks will be home by four, may we all meet for dinner at the table d'hôte at five?

"Yes to both," said Helen cheerily. "Au revoir, Mr. Audran!"

CHAPTER VIII.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

HELEN went directly to her mother's room on their arrival at Interlaken, and was instantly greeted with, "What is the matter with your arm, child?"

"Oh, it is a long story, mother. You shall know all about it directly. It is all right now, I think; but a surgeon is coming presently to make sure. You must help me to get ready for him; and please, dear mother, bring me some things from my room, and let me dress here, while I tell you about it."

So the history of the last three days was told in a very effective way, and very much to Mr. Audran's credit. "Did you ever see such a man, mother?" said Helen, as she ended her tale.

"Evidently you never did," replied Mrs. Dysart. "He must be a wonderful person indeed, if he has captivated our difficult Helen."

"I do not deny it," she answered. "We have agreed to be always the best of friends, and meantime we are to say whatever we like to each other, just as we have done for the last three days. His flattery is something worth while, mamma, I can assure you."

"Has he made love to you, Helen?"

"No, not at all. He would not do such a thing under such circumstances; but he has told me frankly that he likes to be in my company, and should be sorry to leave it. Only think, mamma, what his life must be on those dreary Colorado plains, with nothing about him except Indians and cattle."

"Why does he live there, then?"

"He went for his health, in the first place. He had been told that it was necessary, and he invested all his fortune in such a way that he cannot get it back at present, and he ought not to do so, for it is increasing rapidly. So he *must* stay."

"Well," said Mrs. Dysart, "I think you must have kept him pretty much to yourself, to learn all this. Perhaps Alice will have a different story to tell about him. She does not like to be neglected."

"Alice was really absurd. She kept pushing me on him and him on me; you know what a tease she can be. You will see by and by whether she thinks well of Mr. Audran or not."

"Very well, I shall soon know," said her mother. "Meantime, there is another Richmond in the field. You must prepare yourself to be very civil to the Baron Waldeyer."

"The Baron Waldeyer! 'What is Hecuba to me or I to Hecuba?'"

"Did you not meet him on the boat, the day you left?"

"Yes, I did; but I had forgotten it. Mamma, I have n't told you, but I shall never forget the baroness

and that morning. She took the greatest and most sudden fancy to me, — past all understanding."

"No, Helen, not past mine or hers. I have something very strange, very important, to tell you; but I must not begin before the doctor comes." And Mrs. Dysart proceeded to arrange for her child a most effective and dainty invalid's toilet of white muslin wrapper and pale-blue ribbons. Scarcely was it complete when the card of M. le Docteur Sciler, Chirurgien, was brought to the door, and the doctor himself followed.

He examined the shoulder carefully, pronounced it perfectly in place, and the swelling very slight. Almost all traces of the accident would be gone in a day or two, and mademoiselle was very much indebted to the gentleman who so promptly replaced it, he said. Was much force required?

"I think not," said Helen. "I was under chloroform, but my companion said it seemed to be done more by some sleight of hand than by violence."

"Ah!" said the doctor, "the procedure of the Americans, — method of Reid and Bigelow. It is not every surgeon who has learned the proper manipulation. Your friend is an adept, it appears, — very successful, certainly, for an amateur. He has also told me that you have employed a decoction of hamamelis as a dressing. That also is well. My work is anticipated. Should any unexpected trouble occur, I shall be pleased to be called in again; but for the present I have the honor to wish you good evening." And the doctor bowed himself out.

"Now, mother, what is it?" said Helen, as the door closed.

And Mrs. Dysart recounted with wonderful precision all that had passed between herself and the baroness. They were still in earnest conference when Alice and Eugene entered. When Mrs. Dysart had made sure that they were safe and sound, she asked, "Have you had a good time, Alice?"

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Dysart! That is the way to live, — to have every sort of pleasure prepared for you, and then to enjoy it with the best company in the world."

"So you too admire the Audrans, do you?" said Mrs. Dysart.

"Of course I do. Walter is my peculiar property, and he is a perfectly splendid boy; and as for Robert, if Helen ever lets him go, she ought to die an old maid."

"Suppose he lets her go, Alice," said Helen.

"Nonsense! He worships you, you know he does; and if you don't know, I do. Did n't he save your life, when we sent that awful log down on you? Oh, if we *had* killed you, forever and forever! We should have done it had it not been for him, and none of us ever could have been happy again, — never! Mr. Audran saved you and all of us, and then he treated you like all the skilful doctors in the world put together; and long before that he as much as told me that you were all the gain and all the good of life to him. He let you go? Why, you were made for him!"

Helen was almost as much excited as Alice as she

said, "Now, Alice, please make an end of this just now and here and forever. Mr. Audran and I shall be good friends as long as we have a chance, and that is all there is of it. You make yourself ridiculous and me wretched by assuming that there is anything more. You are endangering all my pride and self-respect, and you will annoy Mr. Audran by putting him where he does not wish to go. You would not drive him away from us all, would you, dear?"

"Well, all I can say is that I hate it!" said Alice. "I hate these measured words, these smothered feelings. It is not the way in which we have lived these last four days. Mr. Audran broke that all up at once, and taught us that we might say just what we thought and do just as we felt. It was lovely, and there was no harm in it."

"Yes," said Helen, "Mr. Audran knows how to make everything pleasant, and he felt that this little trip was to be a thing apart by itself, a venture out and away from the world, a brief season with Nature, where perfectly natural impulses might rule; and it was refreshing and memorable. But Mr. Audran knows just as well that impulses do not rule the lives of sensible people, and that in the main we must make to-morrow like to-day; he would not think of continuing the manners of an excursion like ours into the life of a man of the world; and you would not like it if he did. You would not be so impulsive in your own case, Alice: it is only for your friends that you assume so much, and are so very inconvenient."

"Well," said Alice humbly, "it was very nice while it lasted, but I won't say any more. There is no use in arguing with you, Helen; but if you feel as you talk now you are colder-hearted than I thought you were yesterday."

"Let it pass, dear," said Helen, with a sigh; "and now go and dress for dinner, and please come back afterward and get a note for Mr. Audran. Mamma and I must be alone all the rest of the evening. Can we trust you with those three gentlemen, or must we send you to bed?"

"How provoking you are! I shall make no promises now. You and Mrs. Grundy may inquire into the matter afterward, if you like."

Then Helen wrote her little note: —

DEAR MR. AUDRAN, — I told you that I felt as if some crisis were coming: it has come. My mother and I have enough to do to consider it. To-night we must give to each other. Later I may explain further.

H. D.

Then the two resumed their interrupted conversation.

"Now tell me, mother dear, what real impression of the baroness has all this left on your mind?"

"It is not so hard for me to understand her," said Mrs. Dysart. "As a young woman she was a person entirely emotional, with no resources of education or society. Her faculties were altogether undeveloped; she knew nothing of the world; and she has a most ardent temperament, — nothing but the most devoted love and

attention would have satisfied her. She could not enter into your father's cares and business anxieties; she could not even entertain his leisure — if indeed he had any — with any theme but herself. She never loved him really, but she had a most insatiable need of being loved by some one.

"Your father has often told me that he did a great wrong in not devoting more time and thought to her. But he was working with the greatest anxiety to rescue that mine, and to convert a crushing disaster into success. And he did it. This, and this alone, was the idea of his life at that time; and just as success greater than he had dared to hope had become assured, you were born; and as your mother says, and her physicians said also, she was not fully responsible for what she did. Women after a confinement often become morbid to the point of insanity in some one direction, while apparently sane in all others. He left her, — he should have stayed with her, — and she was stung by the apparent neglect into a kind of monomania, the common result of which would have been the taking of her own life; instead of which she fell into the way of this Baron Waldeyer, who, according to her account of him, must have been a remarkable man, — such a man as some of Shelley's biographers would like to have us believe him to have been.

"Most men capable of enticing a married woman from her home would be capable of deserting her in a month; but this man was an exception. He continued fond and faithful till he died; and they lived a life

apart from the world, filled with thought and study and enthusiasm, under which her excellent natural powers developed, and she became a thoroughly well-educated woman. Without children or domestic cares of any kind, they lived in and for each other, cultivating a romantic sort of morality and philosophy, for which, I dare say, we might all be the better. At any rate, she regards him as the author of all her powers; and she has such skill in conversation, and is so continuous and logical in her discourse, that it is evident she has been formed on some masculine model, and that a good one; while her thoughts and feelings are full of tenderness, as only those of a woman who has been dearly and entirely loved and trusted can be. I do believe that these two abandoned people were thoroughly gentle, conscientious, and forbearing toward each other, and that they meant to do every good for which they found opportunity. How else could it be that when the baron came to die, he should have thought so much of you, as one who might take his place in cherishing and comforting her? How else can it be that she speaks of him always as though he had been the model of every virtue, and that, with wealth and station at her command, her first desire and longing should be for a quiet life and family affection? I think, too, there is a sense of wounded conscience which leads her to wish very earnestly to make amends to her own daughter and your father's child. Withal, she has the instinct of an outlaw: she has framed her defence against society, believes it effective, is aware of her resources, and means to use them

to the best advantage. In an extremity she might be cruel, perhaps, but only in extremity. She is not selfish or vindictive, but she is resolute and strong."

"Do you think my father has any conception of such a character in her?"

"Oh no! He has believed for years — we both believed — that immediately after her flight she went to the bottom of the ocean, with all her perverse and half-insane fancies upon her, never more to suffer or to repent. The thought of it has always been a great sorrow to him; and I was so glad to hear her say that he was never unjust or unkind to her. The only sin she charged him with was that he did not love her as she desired to be loved. He has often told me that she had excellent qualities, which training might have developed, and has mourned over her starved heart and early death. In one sense, I know it will be a relief to him to learn that she lives, and has passed a sweet and tranquil life. We must hope that she is essentially good, and kind beyond the ordinary standard of men and women; for I fear she has us very much at her mercy in some respects."

"Why? What can you mean, mother?"

"I mean that, so long as she lives undivorced, *she* is still your father's wife, whatever I may be, and that my children share my doubtful position."

"Oh, no, no! That is impossible! That is a nominal thing only. Surely, dear mother, you will not let that trouble you."

"My dear, it *is* nominal, but then the names of things

stand for the things themselves to half the world. The scandal-loving and the malicious could use this circumstance to our infinite annoyance and reproach, and they would do so. There are always people who joy and glory in giving undeserved pain to those whose station in society has been such as ours. Of course, as the baroness says, there must be a divorce; and it is quite in her power to make it a public matter, or something done in a corner. Any way, it will be as she chooses."

"But surely she has more at stake than we. She is but one, and we are five."

"Yes, that is it: she *is* but one, and we are *five*. Her life is half done; our children's lives are beginning. She is not entangled, as we are, in a large social circle. Think of all the base uses which malice might make of such a circumstance, and of what we might suffer, particularly Julia.

"Beside this, there is her power over your father's fortune to be considered. You remember that Julia wrote that he was troubled and sleepless about something; and she has told me that that man Fayrolle, who was mentioned in the letter, is her agent. I have been trying to recall what your father once said to me on the subject. As nearly as I can remember, it was that on the very day when Manuela left London, he, at Glasgow, closed a contract with a Scotch company, by which he sold to them the mine, receiving from them £10,000 and a royalty of one fourth of the production of the mine; that in six weeks after, with an engineer and superintendent of their choice, he returned to Mexico,

leaving you in care of an excellent old lady whom he knew; that he remained there three months, and then returned to Glasgow and became one of the resident directors; and it was there you know, that he married me, — when you were about eighteen months old.

"Now, your mother being dead as we supposed, you were her only heir, — only heir of old Parédes also; and so your father naturally treated the £10,000, and the stock, which for twenty years continued to pay great dividends, as his own; and for her share — the larger share — of that, with the addition, perhaps, of what the lawyers term mesne profits, she may now call him to account. I tremble to think what the amount may be, — much more than he could repay, I fear. He has often told me that this mining affair was the one great success of his life. What would become of us all, in that case? Is that not enough, Helen?"

"A great deal more than enough, dear mother; and yet you think that she does not seem disposed to use her power. Why, then, does she menace us with it? What does she want?"

"She wants you, dear; and, of course, I do not want to give you up to her. To do her justice, she did not hint at the power she might exercise until I had defied her to do her utmost in case we chose to keep you from her, and then she did it as mildly as was compatible with being fully comprehended."

"Of course she must know that to carry out any part of what she threatened would settle forever the question of my ever having anything to do with her?"

"Yes; and that may have been the reason why she was so very moderate. You could hardly imagine that a meaning so hard and painful could be conveyed in words and tones so gentle; but all the time the iron purpose could be felt under the silken courtesy. How did she behave to you on the boat?"

"She quite broke down, and broke me down too. As Alice said, we both went to pieces in the most extraordinary way."

"There is another side to the matter," said Mrs. Dysart. "Before she hinted of the harm which it is in her power to do, she tried to allure by indicating how much she has to bestow. It was not made a parade of, only delicately intimated. She would make you her heiress, give you all manner of social chances, etc. But I did not mean to speak of this: you will hear that more naturally from herself."

"Well, I must see her," said Helen. "All this will seem different, perhaps, when I hear it from her own lips; but, mother dearest, you can't imagine that it can make any difference with me? However I may be complicated with her, I am more your daughter than any one's else, and a thousand times more proud and fond of you than I could be of any other. Oh, how good you have been never to let me feel that there was any difference between me and the other children, — to have been always so kind and true to the child of a stranger and a reprobate!" and she kissed Mrs. Dysart passionately, and again and again. "Now, mother, shall I go to her?"

"Yes, dear, the sooner the better, I think. Anybody else I should wish to caution and instruct; but you, — you will do just what is right; only don't anger her."

Helen went to her room to make some little changes in her dress, and sent a card: "Miss Dysart will call upon the Baroness Waldeyer in her apartment, in a quarter of an hour, if the baroness can receive her."

The servant promptly brought back a card with these two words upon it, "Do come."

A few moments later Helen tapped lightly at the door, which was opened at once by the lady herself. "Come in, dear child," she said. "I have been sitting apart and alone since noon, waiting for this visit, and I have been hoping and planning for it for years. When you kissed me on Tuesday morning, I felt that it was not for the last time. Helen, I have not been a good mother to you in the past, but it is my great desire to be so now. Whatever of life remains will be very sad if I must spend it without you, and it seems to me that it might be very, very happy if you will consent to make it so. Through you I can make the only possible atonement for the wrong I did your father. You may know something of what the chagrin and sorrow of a childless wife is said to be, — believe me, it does not compare with that of a mother for ever kept apart from her only living child. What is your feeling toward me, Helen?"

Helen looked long and searchingly at the stately figure before her. The baroness was simply but richly dressed in black. Her abundant white hair was brushed smoothly up and back under a veil-like barbe of Span-

ish lace. The same lace trimmed the square corsage, and was gathered and confined under the white throat by a cluster of large pearls set in black enamel. Helen felt that her mother had dressed herself to meet her eye, and the thought gave her pleasure. There was a moment of silence, then she said, "I do not know if you expect me to answer that question exactly, madame. I have not yet recovered from the surprise which my mother's account has given me."

"I hope Madame Dysart has been able to tell you all or most of that which passed between us. It will then not be necessary for me to rehearse it. You have called her your mother, Helen. Not even the pain which that word from your lips occasions can make me forget that she has earned it over and over again from you, and that I owe her whatever is due to one who has saved and guarded and restored my greatest treasure. But if you call her mother, what will you call me?"

"That is hard to say," answered Helen. "Perhaps it may be mother, too."

"Are we not like each other, Helen? Come, stand with me before the glass"; and she led her to a full-length mirror, passed her arm around her waist, and drew her to her side. "See!" she said triumphantly.

There was indeed a striking likeness. The same broad, low brow; the same finely-cut nose, with spirited nostrils; the same pure complexion, though the mother's was of darker hue; and, more notable than all, the same oval curve to cheek and chin, and full, columnar neck.

"I am old and heavy," said the baroness, "and you

are young, but we are of the same height, and once my figure was slender as yours. See here!" and she drew from her drawer a folding case of Russia leather, containing three pictures of herself, — one daguerreotype, dated 1840, and two photographs, marked 1850 and 1860. That of 1850 would, allowing for fashion of dress, have been a fair portrait of Helen herself. "Are we not enough like one another to be mother and daughter, Helen? You have old Castilian blood in your veins. Your great-uncle was President of Mexico, and your great-grandfather an Admiral of Spain. You were Helen Parédes Dysart when I left you in your cradle, but I suppose they never let you hear that name." Still they stood before the glass, and now the baroness loosened her arm from Helen's waist. "Kiss me, dear, before I let you go, and I will show you something more."

She kissed her daughter on forehead and lips, and then, stooping, drew from a drawer two miniature cases. "This is your great-grandfather's portrait, Helen," she said. It was a miniature on ivory of a fine, soldierly man, in the showy uniform of a Mexican general.

"Now," said the baroness, "sit down on the sofa and let me tell you a little story about the other. You must carry it away with you when you go; it belongs to you now. I have told you that your great-grandfather was an Admiral of Spain: he was more than that, — he was a brave man. When he was a young lieutenant of marine, he was for the time attached to the suite of Charles the Third, then the reigning king, at a time

when he was making his customary tour of the provinces. One day — it was the 11th of August, 1771 — he was crossing the Bidassoa, when the bridge broke, and the king and all his escort were thrown into the river. From the wreck of the bridge and the mass of men and horses struggling in the water, my grandfather seized and rescued the king, almost losing his own life in the effort. This brought him into notice, and, added to his own merit, resulted in great promotion. The king gave him this locket, inscribed with the royal name and this motto, 'Pro vita reddita,' — that means, 'For a life restored,' you know. It was a great treasure to him; and, dearest, there it is, 'for a life restored' to me, — your life, my darling. Let it be your mother's first gift to you. Never mind looking at it now. It belongs to you. You are his latest descendant." And she placed the little case of faded morocco in Helen's hand.

"Helen, do you think I was a very wicked woman to leave your father as I did? I can see now how wrong it was; but you do not know how wild and wretched and bewildered I then was. It seemed to me that he never had loved me and never could; and to be loved was a necessity of my nature. I felt as though I must die if no one cared for me; that without love and sympathy I should become wicked and deceitful and cruel. I don't know to this day how I did it; and when I met Baron Waldeyer in Brussels, as I had appointed, I had no idea how I got there, — it was all like a delirious dream. How certain it would seem that such a step must conduct to some bitter end! But it was not so

with us. The baron was a wonderfully good man, — an enthusiast, whose soul had revolted from the common restraints of life because of the tyranny of schools and priests. He found what he sought for in my young and wounded spirit; and from the day I went to him to the day when he went from me never to return, he was all that a lover, a husband, a father, and a teacher could be. We were together constantly, and never was there a cloud or a chill between us. Can the daughter of Mr. Dysart admit of any explanation, any excuse, for the wife and mother who abandoned him and her?"

"The daughter can believe, as she is told the father does, that the act was done in an irrational and irresponsible state of mind, induced, partly at least, by physical causes."

"Thank God!" said the baroness, "if such charity has covered my name and memory. Indeed, indeed, I believe it was the truth, but I dared not hope to have it recognized by those I had wronged. Helen, if I might venture to say it, I have always felt that my disappearance was a great and happy relief to your father. The second choice which he made was infinitely more for his pleasure and advantage than his first. I never could have satisfied him; I can well believe that Mrs. Dysart has done so. Your father was beguiled into marrying me in that lonely home among the mountains, where he then supposed he might have to spend his life. In the open world, among men and women, neither of us could ever have chosen the other. No busy, intent, thoughtful, ambitious man ought ever to have married me.

The Baron Waldeyer is the only man I ever knew who could have made anything out of me, and he did it by the education of a lifetime, associating me constantly with himself, whose bright intellect was not more remarkable than his gentleness and justness of temper. If I talk all the time of myself, Helen, it is because I am pleading my own cause, — because I cannot bear to fall under the judgment of one whose life has been calm and serene and spotless as yours, till I have done what I may to convince you that your mother is not and has never been simply a faithless, erring woman. Our life — the baron's and mine — was always recluse. We never kept terms of intimacy with any of our country neighbors. In the summer we sometimes spent a month in the Black Forest or the Tyrol, and in the winter we occasionally went to some Mediterranean town or island, — to Naples, or Palermo, or Malta; but nine months in every twelve we lived on our own estate near Colmar. So it comes that I have no social aids or social channels for my life. I ask nothing of the world which I have not already: it holds nothing that I want except yourself."

"And what is it that you want of me, dear madame — m-mother?" said Helen.

"The right to call you daughter, the hope to see you often, the chance to serve your needs; your love while I live, your voice in my ear, your image in my eye; when my senses sink in death, your prayer for my parting soul, your tear for my memory. Helen, I want to *be* your mother."

Helen trembled in the conflict of feeling as she answered, "But how can I be divided from the associations of a lifetime, from all the sure and long-proved sympathies among which I have grown up, from the scenes where my past is laid, from the methods in which only I can work, from the objects which I desire to win?"

"I do not ask it, Helen. I do not want to direct or control your life; I only want to observe it, near or remote, as you may choose. You will not find me intrusive; you will find me serviceable. Whatever your hold on others, whatever their hold on you, if you wish it to abide, I do not wish it to be disturbed. I may not go with you into your father's house, — that is just punishment for my wrong-doing, — but I would offer, if I may, what amends are possible, and I cannot go unloved all the rest of my days. I am not young, but there is life in me yet. It was this sense of want which drove me from my husband once. Will my daughter drive me away again? To whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of life. I wonder at you, Helen, — I wonder that you should be nearly thirty years old and Helen Dysart still. Perfect in form and feature, perfect in voice and manner, full of sense and force and youth and love, — are there no mates for such in your land that you have not been wooed and won? Wooed often enough, it must be. You think I am flattering you, my darling, perhaps, — that this mode of speech is of purpose. You don't know how I have dreamed of you for years, — of what you might be like. If you had been very plain, I should have wanted you just the

same, but not just as much. I had my own notion of you. I thought of you as pleasing, pretty, petite, slender, frail, petulant, like so many American girls whom I have seen at Nice and elsewhere. I never imagined you as fair and firm and fresh and full; I never dreamed how much I was to win in winning you, and I am elated in proportion. On one trait in you I feel that I may count, and that is sincerity. You would despise me if you thought I did not mean what I say, and you would detect falsity at once. With you I could not dare be false."

"Where do you get all your words, mother? It must be your Spanish blood. We Americans are slower of speech."

"Yes, dearest, I know I am excited; but, as I told you, I hardly dared to let you speak until I felt sure that you would say the word I wish to hear. You have said it, — mother. Helen, I will not burden you further at present. You shall go now, darling, to think over what I have said; but oh, how poor are words to explain all I wish you to understand!"

The baroness rose. On the opposite wall hung an engraving of the Sistine Madonna; it caught her eye. With sudden emotion she flung herself upon her knees, and with clasped, upraised hands and beseeching eyes she prayed, —

"Mary, Mother, Beloved, Spotless, — as thou didst love and worship thy divine Son, so intercede with him that my daughter's heart may become mine!"

Helen's tears started at the sight of such emotion;

and her mother, rising, took her in her arms and comforted her "as one whom his mother comforteth."

"Go, darling, to your other mother. Carry her my love and thanks. You shall not again see me so demonstrative. We will be bright and cheery now."

Helen kissed her tenderly, and went as bidden.

CHAPTER IX.

BARON WALDEYER.

HELEN hastened along the passage toward Mrs. Dysart's chamber, and, making a sudden turn, she came suddenly face to face with Robert Audran.

"Miss Dysart! Is that you, — weeping too?" as he looked in Helen's swollen eyes. Can I serve you in any way? If I can, you will tell me, I am sure, and will not think me intrusive."

"No, you cannot serve me, — at least not now," said she; "but indeed it is a comfort to know that you are here. I cannot explain more at present, but you shall know soon all about this crisis of which I spoke. Good-night!"

Mrs. Dysart was awaiting her. Helen entered and sat down.

"Tears, Helen? What a woman the baroness is! She has been very sweet to you, I know; for you would not cry for anything else."

"Yes, mother, you say truly, 'What a woman!' She sent her love and thanks to you."

"What is that in your hand?"

"Something which she made me take. I was so disturbed when I left her that I did not know I had it. Some jewel or decoration of her grandfather."

She opened the box and took from it a medallion, — a disk of gold, about two inches in diameter, stamped in the middle with the royal arms of Spain, and the legend, "Carolus III. Rex Hispan. et Ind. a el Capitan Manuel Parédes. Pro vita reddita." Surrounding the legend were two bands of blue enamel, each containing, in ouches of silver, six rose-diamonds, and where the bands joined was a thirteenth stone, — a large and valuable brilliant.

"It is very quaint and rare," said Mrs. Dysart, "and very precious for its associations to those to whom it belongs."

"She says it belongs to me, mother, as the latest representative of his race."

"She can give it to you if she chooses ; but, in accepting it, even more than if it were some gift not an heirloom, you accept your relationship to her. With all her impetuous feeling, the baroness does not lack adroitness. Was she very dramatic, Helen ? "

"I did not think of it while I was with her. She seemed perfectly natural. I could not feel that she had studied her part at all. As for me, my part was nothing ; she did all the talking, — and does n't she talk well ?

"Did she develop anything new, — anything more than she had said to me ? "

"No ; but she made me feel how intense was her need of me. Mother, she is charming ; she must have been very attractive once, she is so sweet and smooth and soft, — so graceful in all her motions and ways. She says she has lived a very recluse life. It is clear that

she has not wasted her energy in dissipation or idleness."

"No," said Mrs. Dysart, "I can believe that these two people, — Baron Waldeyer and herself, — recognizing from the first the frailty of the tie which bound them, and the ruin of their life if it should break, set themselves to the preservation of it. They seem to have been complementary natures. She was intensely emotional, and he speculative and critical. Each was probably exactly suited to the other. Helen, she would be a most interesting friend; and, in her present temper at least, most delightful and genial. Her love and pride would be a pleasure to you; and I think there is a subtile sympathy between you. I have come to feel as your father does about it; for, since you left me, this letter has arrived from him."

She gave the letter to Helen, who read: —

NEW YORK, June 21.

DEAR EUGENIA, — Julia has written you within a few days. I shall not, therefore, have any domestic news to communicate, except, in a general way, that all goes well with the house and in Wall Street. We are both delighted at such constant and pleasant news from you. You will be quite cured of your rheumatism, I hope, — perhaps before you go to St. Moritz. God send that you may do well enough to come back to us all in November, even if you should have to go to Florida in February.

You are enjoying a great deal, it seems; and now, in

Switzerland, in July, it will be charming. I could feel young again myself with Helen and Alice, among such mountains and lakes. But there is an overhanging cloud, and its shadow comes toward you; perhaps it is even now dark over you, — a most unforeseen, and even now, it sometimes seems, a most incredible complication. I first became aware of it in the early days of this month, by a visit from a Frenchman, a stranger, who called himself Fayrolle, — Louis Fayrolle.

Eugenia, he presented himself as the agent and representative of the Baroness Waldeyer, residing near Colmar in France, or French Switzerland. And who, in Heaven's name, do you think she proves — for I cannot doubt the proof — to be? My first, my long-lost wife, Manuela, — Manuela! who, we never doubted, was drowned at sea twenty-nine years ago. It seems that she has been living peacefully, quietly, and — if I may believe Fayrolle — an exemplary life, as the wife of a Baron Waldeyer, philanthropist, philosopher, poet; and now she reappears as his widow to claim our Helen, her daughter!

I declare to you that it was with very mixed feelings that I learned this story. There was relief in the feeling that that poor young creature had not perished in an act of infidelity to which she had been led by my culpable neglect and by her own morbid condition. But there was another different feeling. She can or could do us a great deal of harm. As we were never divorced, she is yet, in the eye of the law, my wife. The law will break the tie, no doubt, and declare that its

existence has been only technical for nearly thirty years. There is no penalty for me to dread, — in this case, alas! it falls on you, for you are liable to be quoted, by the malicious, as not being my wife; and, if this woman chooses, she may publish the fact as widely as she pleases. More than that, — our children; it makes me sick to think how their innocent names may be dragged through the mire of gossip. And even worse than that; for if our social position and means remained what they have been, we could in time live down scandal; but she has, I fear, an awful hold on all that I possess, — the mine, nine tenths of which were her father's and so hers, and all the enormous profits of twenty years. It can be figured up to half a million at least; and that is more than I am or ever shall be worth.

What chance she would have of recovering this at law I don't yet know, for I have not been willing to start reports by consulting a lawyer.

Dearest wife, I have not told you this because it has been the spectre which has cheated me of sleep for a fortnight. I would have borne it alone, if it had not been for a practical, and perhaps a vital, point at issue, and which is or may be in your control.

This man Fayrolle says — indeed, Manuela, in her very able and effective letter, though she is careful not to mention money in any way, gives me to understand — that she will accept her daughter Helen in full payment of all claims against her father. It sounds like her; she never did think or care for money. Now, do not think, you dear woman, that I want to *sell* Helen. She is not

a chattel. I could not make a delivery, as we say in Wall Street. God knows I wish she were married, and so out of any suspicion of control from me! But this most exacting woman, who reminds one of the old play, "All for Love, and the World Well Lost," has nursed her desperate passion for her child until she fancies she can regain her like some substantial possession. Why, if she had never left me, the child would, in all probability, have passed beyond her control — as likely as not, out of her sphere — before now. If she loves Helen, — as, upon my soul, I believes she does, consumingly, — she would now be pining to have her well married, in which event she would be hers no longer. At any rate, she could never possess more of her than Helen voluntarily granted, and all such claims as I have stated would make no difference whatever. She is wild in pursuit just now (how often we see that!) and if she were to succeed she would find that success was something very different from her fancy. (How often we see that too!)

Any actual control of Helen is therefore a phantom. But she is a woman of real or assumed rank, of fortune, Fayrolle says, of good manners and an education, acquired I know not how; this her letter proves. Indeed, it was a remarkable letter, and it reflected an adult or matured phase of the woman who wrote that parting letter thirty years ago. She has, therefore, in herself and in her circumstances, advantages which Helen might well be anxious to secure.

So, dear Eugenia, it seems to me, on the whole, that

as this baroness is pretty sure to waylay you somewhere in Switzerland, you will do well to humor her. Give her the shadow she pursues, and (I hate to seem mercenary) the spectre will be laid. I must trust you to put these ideas before Helen. She will never believe that I love her less for urging them.

Ever faithfully yours,

ADRIAN DYSART.

Mrs. Dysart watched Helen's telltale face as she read, and marked the shadows that flitted across it, as cloud-shadows flit across a summer landscape. She handed the letter back to her mother, with a dissatisfied air.

"Well, I might as well surrender at once," said she. "The baroness pulls, and you and father push. Is there strength enough in me not to move? It seems that I have risen into somewhat sudden importance. Here are you three old people — and Mr. Audran too, perhaps — who are speculating on what is to be done with poor me."

"Perhaps the Baron Waldeyer will enter the field."

"That would be too much! Really, it is flattering, — I, a modern Helen, and this a new tale of Troy!"

Mrs. Dysart rose and rang the bell, and bade a servant bring a cot and bedding. "I do not wonder, Helen, that with your fatigue, your arm, the chloroform, and all this complication, you are tired and nervous. You must not go away to your room alone; you must sleep here by me to-night, where we can speak if we do not sleep. We shall need all our nerve to-morrow."

So they passed the night, and exhaustion gave Helen sound and tranquil sleep.

While they were dressing in the morning, the servant brought a large basket of loose flowers, and an envelope containing a small drawing and a line from the baroness: "Good-morning to my child. Here is one of my little sketches. It is our château at Hohentauben, near Colmar."

It was a tablet of paper, of the cabinet size of photographs, and the drawing was in sepia. It showed a rocky height, standing at the outlet of a small lake, and looking in one direction down a wooded ravine close-walled by hills; in the other over a small, peaceful lake, with sloping shores, smooth and well-cultivated, bounded by a far-off, misty range of hills. This height was crowned by an old feudal castle, its stern towers and walls softened by climbing vines, and modernized by piazzas and balconies. A sail-boat, in the middle of the lake, was the only token of human presence in the picture.

They were still looking at it when Alice's sweet voice was heard at the door. Mrs. Dysart glanced at Helen.

"Shall we tell her about it?"

"Yes," said Helen. "She cannot be kept long in the dark, and I want her verdict. Come in, Alice!" and in she came, fresh and beautiful as the morning itself.

"What are you two about?" she said. "Oh, what lovely flowers, — what colors and what odors! and what a dear little picture, — the Vale of Tempe, I declare!"

"And what do you say to that?" said Helen, pointing to the open locket-case upon the table.

"Why, that is superb! Whose is it, pray?"

"It was given to my great-grandfather by a king of Spain," said Helen.

"Your great-grandfather! Dysart — or Mavrosigi?"

"To my great-grandfather Parédes. Alice, the baroness is my mother!"

"Then Sinbad the Sailor is your father, I suppose," said Alice.

"It is true, Alice," said Mrs. Dysart. "The baroness was Mr. Dysart's wife, and is Helen's mother."

The amazement of the girl was so intense that both the ladies laughed. This enraged her.

"And you both seem so happy over it! I think I had better go straight back to New Brunswick, where they make harness and buckles and oilcloth, and things that people can understand! And what is your name now, Helen?"

"Helen Parédes Dysart, if you please, Miss Carroll," was the answer; and the dialogue ended in explanations which threw Alice into a state of the highest excitement.

"Have you acknowledged the flowers and picture, Helen?" said her mother.

Helen blushed. "Thank you, mother, for reminding me. It is not too late yet"; and she sent a little note.

The messenger returned presently, with one from the baroness to Mrs. Dysart, in which she begged permission to invite herself, her children, and their compan-

ion, to a little excursion. "We will bring you back to dinner," ran the note. "Our plan is to go to the Giessbach, and return in the afternoon boat."

This threw the party into a state of perplexity; but the influence of Mr. Dysart's letter finally prevailed, and the invitation was accepted. Then the baroness sent another little note: "Mrs. Dysart and family having kindly accepted a proposal for an excursion to the Giessbach, Mme. la Baronne Waldeyer would be further gratified if the Messrs. Audran would add the pleasure of their company." To which Mr. R. Audran replied that the obligations of his correspondence, after some days' absence, would prevent his having that privilege; and that Mr. W. Audran accepted with pleasure.

Eleven o'clock was the hour named for the start; and Helen, who foresaw that her new relationship could not much longer be kept a secret, was anxious to communicate it to Robert before leaving. She therefore proposed to him to walk down the avenue after breakfast, and while walking told him all.

At the hour appointed Baron Waldeyer, with the utmost courtesy, placed Mrs. Dysart, the baroness, and Helen in his own carriage, for the short ride to the Lake of Brienz. The other young people went in another carriage.

The day was perfect, and the baroness in the brightest spirits, full of anecdote, of humorous comment and pleasantry; but there was no allusion to the peculiar relations of the party. Crossing the lake in a little steamer, they found chairs and porters waiting at the

landing, for the use of the ladies; but these Helen and Alice declined, preferring the walk. Walter, Eugene, and Alice led the way, Helen and the baron followed, the elder ladies in their chairs came after.

The baron was at first so ceremoniously polite, so profoundly respectful, that Helen felt she must make an effort to put him at his ease; so she took the burden of the conversation on herself: "The baroness has given me a drawing of her home near Colmar this morning. It seems a very isolated place."

"It is isolated," he replied, "but perhaps not so much so as the picture would suggest. The château is built upon the remains of an old feudal castle, and retains in part its form. Such castles, you know, were generally placed on points which commanded a wide prospect and were difficult of approach. Madame has her tenantry about her, the high-road from Munster to Colmar passes through the ravine, and there are estates on the banks of the river above and below."

"Is that water, then, a river?" said Helen.

"It is an expansion of the Fecht, which looks like a lake. Perhaps it was a lake once, before its escaping waters opened the ravine. Do you not think it a picturesque place?"

"Extremely so," said Helen. "I remember that country between the Vosges and the Black Forest very well; it is extremely interesting. How many castles you see from the railroad while passing through the valley!"

"You are right, mademoiselle. They overlook the

valley from every point. That is because it was a great highway, to which all the Swiss and Burgundian valleys converge or conduct. At one time these castles were the abode of robber barons who lived upon the plunder of the commerce which moved up and down. But you would think, in looking at them now, that they had been placed with the simple purpose of making picturesque and romantic effects in the landscape."

"Why is it," said Helen, "that just that region — southern France, in the valleys of the Rhine and the Rhone, Provence, Burgundy, and western Switzerland — always seems the most interesting part of Europe?"

"I suppose because it has had so eventful a history, has belonged to so many different nations, and been a kind of debatable ground between them. There were the marches, or frontiers, upon which all bordered, and where they made such frequent war upon each other. There is scarcely a plain in all that region which has not been the scene of a battle; scarcely a height which is not crowned by an oft-time besieged fortress. The Dukes of Burgundy, Savoy, Valois, Navarre, and Condé — the Capets and Bourbons and Hapsburghs, and I don't know how many more — have contended about the base of the Vosges and on the plains of Aquitaine. These towers are the chronicles of ages, empires, and religions. And this is the land of the troubadours, of the *gai science*, of sunlight, — unlike the cold and cloudy north, — the land of the fig, the olive, and the vine; the land of Greek and Phœnician colonies older than Rome. It is the beautiful land, where mountain and valley and

plain and swift-running rivers have fed an unfailing stream of chivalry and poetry."

"Voici un exemple," said Helen, smiling.

"Voilà une inspiration," said the baron, bowing.

"And tell me," said she, "how does the baroness live there?"

"The most simple and natural life you can imagine," replied he. "I speak of the lifetime of my brother. Both he and she were like Providence to the tenantry, who brought their wants, their cares, their sorrows, and their quarrels, and rehearsed them all in the château. The mornings were always given to the estate and the gardens, — flowers are the passion of my sister; the afternoons were passed in the library; the early evening, generally, in riding, — the baroness was always a good horsewoman; and later she busied herself with her music, while my brother wrote or studied. But the light and life which children bring was denied them; and since his death, life for her is heavy and sad indeed."

"And will she always live there?" said she.

The baron hesitated, looked grave, and slowly continued, "My sister has made me her confidant. I know her hopes, her wishes. Mademoiselle will pardon me if I say that much depends upon herself."

"On me?" said Helen. "Has she said so?"

"She has said it," answered the baron. "My dear young lady, you do not yet know how passionately your image, yet unknown, has for years been woven into the tapestry of her life; and now, I am sure, it is you who

hold in your hands the shape and color of her remaining days. Manuela is like no other woman. She must have a personal object, another and superior self, dominating her life, and making it serene and joyous by its presence, or hopeless and desperate by its absence. That was her life with my brother; that will be her life, henceforth, with or without *you*. If she might, she would adopt the language of the maiden of Moab; she would say with Ruth, 'Whither thou goest I will go, where thou lodgest I will lodge, thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God.'"

"Madame Waldeyer," said Helen, "certainly has greatest success in enlisting others in her behalf, and great force and skill in making them sympathize with her wishes."

"Yes," said the baron; "her faculties are not more eminent than her command of them. But, my dear Miss Dysart, you must allow me to suggest that the skill and the success depend upon the fact that the ideas commend themselves. What can be more according to the truth of nature than that a mother should desire and seek her only child? Does not such a search instinctively attract sympathy and aid from every one?"

"It may be so," said Helen thoughtfully, and then was silent.

They had reached the terrace which commands the finest view of the Giessbach, springing from the mountain's brow a thousand feet above, in seven successive cascades, all mantled in the richest foliage, forever freshened by the drifting spray. Not far off appeared

the hotel, whose beds of brilliant flowers, and piazzas shadowed with bright awnings, gave a human charm to this lovely sylvan retreat. There they stopped, while the baroness and Mrs. Dysart were borne along the upward path toward the house.

"Have you anything like that in your country?" said the baron. "I have heard, of course, about your great Niagara, where one inland sea drops down into another. For grandeur that must exceed anything of the kind in the world; but have you these beautiful cascades in your smaller streams, like our Reichenbach, Schmadribach, Staubbach, and this Giessbach?"

"Oh, yes," said Helen; "we have numberless beautiful waterfalls beside Niagara. Those that I remember most like this are the Winooski at Marshfield, the Cascadilla at Ithaca, or the falls near Watkin's Glen. At their best, some of them are quite equal to this; but our cascades are generally things of the seasons, because we have spring and autumn floods which swell them to grand effects; but in the midsummer heats, which is the time when they are oftenest seen, the streams are so shrunken that much of their beauty is lost. In Switzerland the season of travel coincides more nearly with that when melting snows make the streams fullest. With us too the approaches to these choice spots are apt to be difficult. We cannot enjoy them leisurely and at ease, as here. That will come by and by."

"Yes," said the baron. "What will not come by and by in your wonderful country, where the capabilities of

a great continent, the culture of all the best races, and the progress of the nineteenth century combine under the sway of illimitable hope? No land or any age ever moved toward empire and splendor at such a rate."

"Indeed, baron," said Helen, "it is a pleasure to be so recognized. Have you learned all this in America? We know it, but Europeans think us braggarts if ever we dare to say what we know."

"Yes, I once travelled through the United States, and as a republican I am aware where our best precedents are found, and the examples which best fortify our political faith. What extraordinary development your communal system as colonies gave to individual men! Even at the birth of your republic, you had such builders of States as Franklin and Hamilton and Jefferson. Of late I have especially endeavored to inform myself about the United States, because it may be that I shall be sent thither."

"In a diplomatic capacity?" said Helen.

"Perhaps I should not have spoken of that which is yet so uncertain," said he; "but if I go at all, it would be in connection with some branch of the public service."

"I can believe," said Helen, "that your interest and your appreciation of our affairs would make such a choice a very fitting one. But, my dear baron, if you should go to America, what would become of Madame Waldeyer?"

"I hope she would go also. She has always been fond of travel, and has had much experience of it. My brother usually took two seasons of absence in each year, in mid-summer and in mid-winter. In that way she

has visited many lands, from Norway to the Nile ; and she has spoken lately of a curiosity to revisit her native land, and revive the memories of her youth."

Engrossed in conversation, they had lost sight of the remainder of the party, who, as Eugene came running back to tell them, were at the hotel, awaiting their coming.

The young people proposed to explore the path to the upper cascades. Helen declined, but the baron went with them. Their walk ended at the grotto behind the fall, whence they could see the beautiful green glade below, and the gay hotel, and the rainbow on the cloud of floating spray. Then they went slowly back through the shadowed path, and the baron caught bright butterflies, and gave Alice curious chapters of insect lore. When they reached the hotel they found the remnant of the party in a pretty pavilion by themselves, and an elegant *déjeuner* prepared. The baroness, meanwhile, had been entertaining her guests with the story of her retreat in 1871, before the invading Prussians, from Colmar to Bâle, — a retreat covered by Bourbaki's army, in which the baron was then second in command. As residents of Alsace, they now belonged to the German empire, but as yet were very imperfectly reconstructed. So good was the *déjeuner* and so amusing was the talk, that they nearly missed the return boat, but at length, about seven, were safely landed at Interlaken.

CHAPTER X.

MR. MAXWELL INTERFERES.

AT Interlaken Walter found a note informing him that Robert had been obliged to go to Bern, but hoped to return in two or three days, and would meet him at Interlaken, or follow wherever he might have gone. If there were no reason to the contrary, he hoped Walter would continue in the company of the Dysarts.

Helen also found a little note: —

DEAR MISS DYSART, — It has become necessary for me to go to Bern. If our Minister is there and disengaged, my business will detain me but a few hours, and I shall hope to see you again day after to-morrow. I regret to delay so long hearing whatever you may please to communicate on the very important matter of which you spoke this morning. A few days will make it appear how far this discovery is to change your life. It is an interesting and momentous problem how far a woman with the character and history of the baroness will be able to win your confidence and regard. Of one thing only be certain: that, whatever your course in the matter may be, it will certainly command the respect of your friend, and on all occasions your most obliged and devoted servant,

ROBERT AUDRAN.

This note was brought to Helen in Mrs. Dysart's room. She read and handed it to her mother.

"A very proper note," remarked Mrs. Dysart, "since you have seen fit to take Mr. Audran into your confidence."

"Are you surprised at that, mamma? It seemed to me that I could hardly do less."

"Perhaps not; but it is evident to me that Mr. Audran neither understands nor appreciates the baroness or the baron. Certainly, I may say that I have seldom met a woman who could make herself so charming or so agreeable as she, nor have I ever seen one whose society *you* seemed to enjoy so much as you did hers this afternoon."

Helen rose and picked up her letter. "Good-night, mamma," she said hurriedly. "The baroness is very charming; but papa and I feel there is no other woman in the world who can step in between us and you."

Her voice trembled and her step faltered as she left the room. Going to her own chamber, she locked herself in, and, throwing herself on the bed, then and there went through with that process of redistribution, rearrangement, and regeneration of the moral forces which is known as a good cry. *Post nubila Phœbus!* In half an hour she rose, with regained serenity, went to her mirror, rearranged her hair, changed her earrings, and fitted a new tie of pretty lace to her shapely throat.

It was still early, and she began to wonder where Alice could be. Going rather hesitatingly down stairs,

she found the baron and the baroness with the three young people seated at a round table in the "conversation room." The baron had placed a book for a centre, and, with a box of dominoes to represent *corps d'armée*, was explaining to his absorbed listeners the siege and capitulation of Sedan. Helen sat down also, and became as much interested as any of them. It was eleven o'clock when the party broke up, and not till they had extracted a promise from the baron to explain at some future time the battle of Gravelotte.

Alice went to Helen's room to compare notes upon the events of the day. She began with the baroness. This had been her first good opportunity of observing that lady.

"I suppose," said she, "that it is because she has never lived with children, her own or others, that she talks to us as if it were needful to make every word good. She does not speak with the authority of rank or social class. Some people, you know, seem to feel that, because they belong to some special class or school, there is vast weight attaching to everything they say. She has not a bit of that. She expects her words to be good for just the sense and truth that is in them, and no more. And she is very amusing. She made such fun of those Prussian soldiers with spectacles!"

"And you had quite a little walk with the baron this afternoon, had you not?" said Helen.

"Oh, I am afraid I shocked him dreadfully," answered Alice. "I was just enough frightened to be saucy; and though he did not seem at all disconcerted,

I can see that he does not care for small talk, and does not invite it. He has a great opinion of your understanding."

"Of mine?" said Helen.

"Yes, of yours. He said you were a person of very conspicuous merit, whatever that means. Does it mean that you showed off a little?"

"You impertinent child! Was anything said about the programme for to-morrow?"

"No, I think not. If Mr. Audran had been here, we should have had a plan of some sort by this time, of course. He was always providing, and disposing of our time in advance. It was very good for us, no doubt; but it was a little superfluous of him."

"It was very kind, I am sure," said Helen warmly.

"Yes," said the perverse girl, "very kind; and he knew just how kind it was, and just how kind he meant it should be. He made routes and plans and paths, and all we like sheep did walk in them."

"For shame, Alice! You know you were his most outspoken admirer thirty-six hours ago. Who was it that called me cold-hearted, because I said much less than you have just said? Who is the fickle one now, I wonder?"

"Well, I suppose it is bad of me," said Alice; "but, oh dear! one set of emotions all the time is tiresome. You are tired of variety, and I want it. You 'll marry Mr. Audran, though, if he asks you, won't you, Nelly?"

"It will be time enough to answer you when I have

answered him, Elsie. But how about the commodity, — your own peculiar property, miss ? "

"You mean Walter, I suppose."

"Yes."

"Well, then, it will be time enough to answer you when I have answered — myself. How cross we are, Helen ! I don't know but the high strain of enthusiasm was better, after all. At any rate, I beg Mr. Audran's pardon. It is not everybody to whom we owe our lives, certainly. Good-night, Angel. I will be a better girl to-morrow."

At the breakfast-table the following morning, Walter received this telegram from his brother : —

Do not leave Interlaken to-day. I return by train, at 1 P. M., but start for New York to-morrow. You can stay if you like. Shall hope to see our friends this evening. R. A.

They were all at table together, including the baron and baroness, and Walter read the despatch aloud. Everybody was interested. To Walter, of course, it was a deep and significant mystery. To the baron, the baroness, and Mrs. Dysart, it brought a certain sense of satisfaction, for each had privately divined that Mr. Audran's influence was not quite in harmony with their wishes. Helen was disturbed, and a dreary look lurked in her deep brown eyes. Alice first found words.

"Oh dear, how provoking ! Mr. Audran was going to take us on all sorts of excursions, and there is nobody who can do it like him. Did n't he say he meant to

stay six weeks? Why does n't he? Can't you make him, Walter?"

"Something important must call him back," said Walter, "for we had talked over this trip, and I know how much he wanted to complete it. He will be awfully sorry to go." And the ingenuous youth looked straight at Helen. "But I can't see now that there would be any use in my going with him. I should only have to come back again in September to Heidelberg. Neither do I know what I shall do without him. It will be dreadful to lose him and you all at once, and to wander about alone."

"Oh, you must n't do that," said Mrs. Dysart. "You must keep along with us. Eugene will be ever so much happier for your company, and so shall we all."

"You are very kind," said Walter gratefully. "Nothing could be more delightful; but of course I can't decide on anything until I see Robert. Perhaps he may want me to carry on some business here which he has begun. I can't tell till he comes."

"What time does he get here?" asked Helen.

"I believe the Thun boat comes in about half-past four."

"Is he sure to come by that route?" inquired Mrs. Dysart.

"I think so. That is the direct route, and much the quickest. He will come by the boat, I am quite certain."

"Very well, then," said Mrs. Dysart. "I propose that we go and meet him at Thun, and have the sail up together. We can leave here at one, I believe."

"That is an excellent plan," said the baroness. "It will be a pleasant surprise to Mr. Audran to see you there, and you must not let us detain you."

"Won't you go too?" said Mrs. Dysart.

"Oh no," replied Madame Waldeyer. "We are less acquainted with Mr. Audran, and I think he will prefer to spend his last day with your family only. We can make our adieux this evening."

"Helen," said Mrs. Dysart, "I have an idea. Mr. Audran has business with your father in New York, and will take letters to him and to Julia; and as we have but four hours to write, I think I shall go up stairs at once and begin my budget."

"So will I. Papa and Julia will like to hear all about us, and I want them to know Mr. Audran."

The explanation of Robert's sudden change of plan was this. On his return from the Furca excursion, he found at Interlaken this letter from his partner in Colorado:—

FOUNTAIN, COL., June 10.

FRIEND AUDRAN, — I guess this letter, which I send to Brown, Shipley, & Co., will find you in Switzerland, and anxious, I dare say, to hear the latest news from the ranch.

Last week we finished our round up out on Chug's Creek. All the ranchmen within a hundred miles were there, and more than 30,000 head of cattle all told. We branded 2,713 for our share. They look remarkable fine, particularly the yearlings and two-year-olds. Most every cow had a calf by her, fat and smooth

as seals, all of 'em. We have had much more rain than usual. Far out on the prairie the gama is thick and green; there will be a better stand than was ever seen before in this country. The cattle won't have to travel all over creation next winter to get their living; and I calculate it will be safe to winter the whole lot, unless the market should be uncommon good this fall. I made a find the other day. I was out about ten miles southeast of here, over towards the Chico. There is a slough there. You have seen it, I dare say. I see lots of cattle working in there; it was kind of curous, and I went speering round for the reason. First off I did n't notice anything particular, but by and by I noticed that the last year's rushes was sort of white round the stalk. So I pulled up some, and found a crust of some sort on the lower joints. I tasted it, — and by the Great Horn Spoons, it was salt! There is a big lot of salt there, just like it is on them salines on the Republican River, in middle Kansas. You better believe I made tracks right off for the Colorado Springs Land Office, and homesteaded a hundred and sixty for you and a hundred and sixty for myself; and I made the line run right through the middle of the slough. If we have got a big salt privilege there, it will be as good as a thousand more cattle. I reckon you will want to put down some of them drive-wells as soon as you come here.

I was over to see our next neighbors, the Foxtons. They call their place Maritana now. They are English, you know, and quality people, — blamed smart fellows, anyway, and they have got about 2,000 as likely critters

as ever you did see. Well, they was all worked up about a piece of news from England. It seems they are nephews of a Lord Thornley, who has a great estate and is a very old man, — eighty odd, they say. This lord he has a son, to whom all the estate would go, and this son is more than fifty, without family. He had been riding after the hounds, and had been thrown and broke his skull, and was likely not to live, and if he did live would n't be of any count. That fetched in these boys heirs to all the property, — houses, lands, title, and everything. If this crack-brained fellow dies, their everlasting fortune is made, and it ain't likely they stay here. They will be in such a hurry to sell out and get off that they will drop their stand and stock for anything they can get, — first offer. I reckon we can buy it for less than half what it is worth, if we can raise cash. It lies so handy right alongside, you could lead your big ditch round 300 acres of it in a week, and one crop of wheat will pay for it twice over. We certainly can give more for it than anybody else. I am going over again next week, and if things work anyways sudden, I reckon I had better telegraph you by cable.

There is another piece of news, — may be you 'll think it is the biggest of the lot. You know Peedie, up on the Cache-la-Poudre, was elected to Congress last fall. Well, he took pneumonia in May, and it turned to a hasty consumption. They say he can't continue a week. If he dies, like as not the governor will order a new election in this district, and they do say our end of it ought to send the man this time. Barnstead, up

to Colorado City, is jealous of the Springs people, and he won't see any one from there put up. Huson, the banker at Pueblo, says you are the best man, and that you will carry all the Arkansas Valley and Huerfano and Wet Mountain, and sweep things generally south of the Divide. The thing is green yet, but there is something in it. You ought to be here right off, if it was a possible thing. I believe this is all, and it is a pretty fair show too. Yours faithfully,

JOHN D. MAXWELL.

Robert meditated long and deeply over this letter. He might be imperatively needed at home at any moment. Whatever he had to do in Switzerland must be done at once. He had opened a scheme to the American Minister for encouraging emigration to Colorado, and it was needful to see him about it before leaving. He started, accordingly, for Bern, while the party were absent at the Giessbach, leaving word that any telegram which might come should be promptly forwarded there. He had not been an hour on the way when the following message was flashed back from Interlaken to Bern: —

FOUNTAIN, COL., July 5.

ROBERT AUDRAN, ESQ., — Maritana, all stock, — graded and common, — horses, house, land, everything. I hold refusal until 11th inst., at $22,000, — 2,000 down on contract, which I can provide, 10,000 payable at Dysart's, N. Y., July 24, balance on time to suit. Prompt answer required. J. D. MAXWELL.

Robert found the message at his hotel. He took the night to think over it, paid a visit to the Minister, arranged another interview for next morning, and spent the evening in deep calculation. Before midnight he had reached his conclusions, and written a telegram to be sent early the next morning: —

J. D. MAXWELL, FOUNTAIN, COL., U. S. A., — Close contract at once. Will be in New York on the 24th, and have the money at Dysart's. ROBERT AUDRAN.

Robert was early, and at six o'clock in the morning had already despatched his message. Then, in the dewy dawn, he walked back along the terrace to his hotel.

Swifter than the hours the message sped, and it was still dreaming midnight when the operator thundered at the door of Maxwell's cabin with his answer.

The second interview with the Minister ended, Robert took the return train at one o'clock. His thoughts now turned to the friends he was so soon to meet and so soon to leave. Walter must remain, in company with the Dysarts, perhaps. How much he would enjoy it! And how was it with himself? He had been so engrossed since the day before as hardly to have thought of Helen. He could forget her, then? Oh, yes, he could; and would it not be better he should? It was certain that this new turn of his affairs must absorb him, and for a long time keep him at a distance from her. If he must leave her, it was well that the call had come thus

early and in a form so peremptory; well that he had not been allowed to linger until it might be more painful and less possible to part. Friends they would always be, whether together or not. He would ask her permission to write to her, her promise to answer his letters.

This had been a sudden passion on his part. He could not yet fully see how it could have any place in the settled requirements of his life: time only could show. His plans? Yes, even for her sake he must pursue them. If all the promise which opened before him now were realized, fortune, honor, influence would become his to share with her. Then he might offer something which would compare with that which she might give, — the grace of her beautiful presence, the tribute of her allegiance, the sweetness of her love and care. If he won her now, the new happiness would bury him in such utter content that there would be no further motive for effort and ambition, and so each would be cheated of the good which should belong to both, and that would be a reproach and a sadness.

> "For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
> The saddest are these, — it might have been!"

He was wont to smile when a verse came up from the chambers of memory to brighten or enforce the thought of the moment; but now his smile perished with a sudden pang as he remembered that this couplet recorded just such a suppressed and stifled impulse as he was now preparing and proposing to himself; and a tide of rising apprehensions carried him quick and clear away

from his elaborately constructed purpose. Did he not risk that which he might never regain? Was not this his opportunity? Should he gain all that he hoped, what more was it than dozens of men had to offer? Would he ever, in the throng amid which he must henceforth look to find her, have so clear, so fair a field? Had he not saved her life and won a warm response, whose warmth, still glowing, would be chilled and overwhelmed by new events and scenes? Heart answereth to heart: if he had loved her so much, was she not, perhaps, loving him as well? And if it were so, or waited but for the word to become so, would it not be cruel, unmanly, selfish, suicidal, stupid, to remand her fresh sympathies to a more convenient season? No other "more convenient season" ever came to King Agrippa; and for the petty cares of his little Syrian kingdom he deferred, and lost, his soul's salvation!

If she loved him at all, it was for what he was, not for what he had. All the place and pelf he looked to win would count but little in her eyes compared with the strength of his desire for her. How could he expect her to trust a nature capable of thus barring the gates of a worldly prudence over its truest emotions? Could he trust himself? Would love, thus stifled, slighted, put away, ever warm his own soul again if he should become immersed in cares and cattle and the bitter waters of the flat prairie, and the chicanery of politics, preferring them to the fresh feeling of a reviving soul? Would not his heart die out in him, — hers, perhaps, in her?

"From pride we both may borrow,
To part we both may dare;
But the heart-death of to-morrow
Nor you nor I can bear!"

The whistle of the train as it ran alongside the dock roused him from his reverie. He grasped his satchel and went on board the boat, calm enough in manner, but very disturbed and irresolute at heart.

Walter met him at the gangway with impatient greeting. "Is there bad news, Robert?"

"No, boy, the news is not bad, — perhaps very good, — but important to my affairs in Colorado. We are going to double our investment by buying another property. The opportunity is sudden, accidental, and too good to be lost. I must go and pick it up. How are you all?"

"Oh, we are all right, and all here. The ladies are up stairs, and waiting to see you. Come on!"

"This is very kind of you," said he, as he advanced to meet them. His voice faltered as he saw Helen standing a little behind her mother, with face rose-flushed, and eyes which seemed to lighten with something of the feeling which trembled in his own.

"We count your minutes, now, Mr. Audran," said Mrs. Dysart, "if indeed you must go to-morrow."

"I regret to say that I must. This is the 7th, and I must catch the steamer of the 12th from Liverpool. Except for the desire of seeing you all again, I should have gone direct from Bern. It is a very sudden interruption of the leisure and pleasure which I had promised myself, but it seems inevitable."

"You will leave us your brother, then, I hope. We will take good care of him. He belongs to us now, and has made his welcome secure for himself, and doubly so as a representative of you."

"You relieve me of a great care, Mrs. Dysart, and remind me how fortunate we have been in meeting you. I could not leave him in company more acceptable to both of us. He at least can remain with you until you shall go to St. Moritz, and I trust he will behave himself properly. Walter, will you obey Mrs. Dysart? Will you be very polite to Miss Dysart, very respectful to Miss Carroll, and get Eugene into no mischief?"

"Such is my desire," answered Walter demurely.

"We will all be mothers to him," said Alice. "Mrs. Dysart shall encourage him, Helen shall advise him, and I will correct him, as occasion requires. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' has been my creed these many years."

"And do you think you can bring me up to suit you, Alice?" said Walter.

"Bring you up?" said Alice, looking over the tall boy; "I think I'll take you down!"

"Oh, thanks! If you'll take me, I'll go down directly."

"Don't, Alice!" said Helen. "Mr. Audran will repent his kindness and send Walter away."

"He had better let Walter repent, and stay. I only wish that Mr. Audran shall understand how faithful I mean to be to my young charge."

"Oh, be faithful, do!" said Walter.

Robert asked Helen about her arm, and she told him that, except for a slight swelling, and some stiffness when she used it, it was nearly well again.

They were passing Spitz just then, and Robert pointed out to Helen the valley of the Kander. "When you shall leave Interlaken," he said, "if you wish to go either to Zermatt or Geneva, you will do well to go by that route across the Gemmi to Leuk"; and from Leuk onward he led her willing fancy here and there over Switzerland, and across the ocean to New York, and out into the wilds of Colorado, with a grace at once so airy and so real that Helen was spell-bound. She made an effort to resume control of herself and him.

"You have never met my sister Julia, Mr. Audran; and I am going to ask you to go and see her in New York. We have some letters for her and my father, if you will take them, and we hope they may be able to acknowledge in some way your great kindness and helpfulness to us. My sister knows you already by description, and will be very glad to see you."

"I shall go, certainly," said Robert. "I could not lose such an opportunity to prolong my relation to you all; but won't it be embarrassing to be investigated by catalogue? How do I know what you may have said of me?"

"I shall be truly sorry to have you go," said Helen. "Now that I am so strangely introduced to a new chapter of life, which means, perhaps, some interruption of the old, it would be a great help to feel your interest,

and perhaps to be able to ask your counsel. Why, here we are at the dock."

On the drive from Neuhaus, Mrs. Dysart told Robert how the baroness had entertained them the day before, and added, "We want your last evening here to be a pleasant one, so I have asked her and the baron to dine with us at seven."

Robert bowed assent, thinking at the same time that the plan did not particularly commend itself to him; while Helen saw in it, very plainly, her mother's jealousy of Mr. Audran's influence, and her wish to prevent an opportunity for its exercise. "We shall sit at table," thought she, "until nine, and in the parlors until ten, and there will be no chance for a quiet talk." However, it would be hard to talk without saying either too much or too little. Yet how should she make the evening memorable to him as she hoped it might be?

"I will dress for him," said she to herself.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE EVENING.

A SIMILAR impulse seemed to pervade the entire party; and the *salons* of the Bellevue had seldom seen so elegant a little party as now gathered at Mrs. Dysart's invitation. With the elder ladies, it was but a change from one black dress to another of richer tissue and ornamentation; but Alice was resplendent in blue silk, with Valenciennes overdress, and fluttering ends and knots of pale blue; and Helen wore a gown in shade like still champagne, — one of Worth's marvels, — with a square corsage, and half-sleeves and train richly trimmed with lace, with ornaments of pale pink coral, and a rose of like hue on either side of her graceful head. The baroness was fairly enraptured with her.

Mrs. Dysart occupied the head of the table, with Robert on her right, and the baroness on her left. Helen sat next to Mr. Audran, and *vis-à-vis* with the baron; Walter with Alice, and Eugene at the foot. The *menu* and the wines were the best which the hotel could afford.

Mrs. Dysart knew perfectly well how to manage her guests, and she drew the baroness and Robert into con-

versation upon New Mexico and Colorado. The baroness was gentle, serene, piquant, and singularly handsome. Robert, who saw the daughter in the mother, could not help being very much attracted by her. The baron, meantime, was giving Helen a graphic sketch of Maximilian's ill-starred attempt at an empire, and of the history of the Empress Carlotta, whom he had escorted on her return to Belgium.

The young people at the other end of the table were intent upon a programme of their own, as presently appeared. When the cloth was removed, Eugene rose, moved back his chair, and, in the style of the after-dinner orator, began, Alice rapping attention on the table: —

"Ladies and gentlemen, It is known to you that we have with us this evening, probably for the last time, our friend, Mr. Robert Audran. To our great good fortune, he came to us on the day of our arrival in Switzerland, and ever since has been the chief promoter of our pleasure and profit. He organized for most of us a very satisfactory pilgrimage, — made such by his experience in travel, his interesting conversation, and his care for all our wants. One of our party owes to him her rescue from the most frightful danger, and her relief from very serious injury; and none of us will ever forget from how great a sorrow his forethought and skill saved us. We had congratulated ourselves that he would remain with us, to guide us through many pleasant scenes in this lovely land; but he has received a call which he cannot disregard, —

'He sees a hand we cannot see,
Which beckons him away.'

"As the representative of my mother's family, I have thought it proper here to tender to him our warmest thanks for the past, and our warmest wishes for the safety and success of his impending journey."

The beginning of this unexpected speech was received with the utmost surprise by the seniors at the other end of the table, and the boy had a very attentive audience. When he sat down his resolute *claque* at the end of the table applauded tumultuously, and were joined with right good-will by all the others. Mrs. Dysart was pleased with her boy; and Alice, who had planned it, was triumphant.

After dinner, Alice was asked to sing. She preluded vaguely for a moment, while taxing her memory for a song; and then, in a very pure and sympathetic voice, began: —

"I shot an arrow into the air;
It fell to earth, I knew not where.
For so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

"I breathed a song into the air;
It fell to earth, I knew not where.
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

"Long, long afterward, in an oak,
I found the arrow, still unbroke.
And the song that I sang, from beginning to end
I found it again in the heart of a friend."

She rose, and would sing no more. The party had risen, and Helen was asked for a song, which, because her arm was not strong enough to play the accompaniment, she could not give; then all united in urging the baroness, who, with remarkable feeling and effect, sang Béranger's "Les Etoiles qui filent"; and as the refrain of each verse — "qui file, et file, et disparait" — died away, the sense of separation and of solitude and of the mutability of all human conditions became so general that the party made haste to separate.

Mrs. Dysart said to Robert, "Shall we see you in the morning?"

"No, madame, I shall be gone before the breakfast hour, and must take my leave to-night."

"Adieu, then," said the baroness, giving Robert her hand. "The baron and myself ought not to trespass upon the little time you have to give to these friends. I feel, Mr. Audran, that we shall meet somewhere again, and become better known to each other."

The baron added, "Should you be in France, Major Audran, you can always hear of me at the Ministry of War. *Adieu, et bon voyage!*"

"We shall learn all about you from your brother, I hope," said Mrs. Dysart, "and next winter shall hope to see you in Fifty-seventh Street. You will have occasion to see Mr. Dysart on business, you say. He and my daughter are probably now at Glenwood. Won't you manage to go up and see them there? Julia will have a thousand questions to ask. We will send our letters to your room to-night. Mine are not finished,

and I think I must go to them. How is it with yours, Helen?"

"Mine are done, mamma. I have not written much, because I want to tell Mr. Audran ever so many things to say to Julia for me. Will you still give me a little time, Mr. Audran?"

Mrs. Dysart had hoped to carry Helen away with her; but she had only rendered it necessary for herself to go, — a fact which the quick-witted Alice at once perceived, as she made up to Robert with her parting salutations.

"Mr. Audran, I have not had the chance to tell you how sorry I am you are going. I never enjoyed anything so much in my life as our excursion to the Furca; and I hoped it was only the prelude to other good things to come. I feel particularly bereaved, because you will see all the Dysarts whenever you are in New York, but you will never come to New Brunswick, and I shall never see you again. It is too bad! Oh dear, why can't you stay? Well, then, good-by, if good-by it must be. I shall make much of Walter, for lack of you. Good-by!" and she sailed away under Mrs. Dysart's convoy, and Helen and Robert only were left together.

Each would have been very much disappointed if it had not been so; and yet each was a little shy of the other.

Helen began the conversation: —

"Mr. Audran, won't you tell me what you are going to do, — what peremptory business it is that calls you home? I want to know all about it. You know I cannot be indifferent to anything that happens to you."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Dysart! That is the very best solace I could have in going away from you all. I should like to give you the fullest account of my plans, if I might. The idea of being followed by your interest would always be a help, a hope, and a restraint to me."

"But I don't want to be a restraint, a hindrance, a marplot!"

"Yes, you do, from whatever is hard or ungentle, or coarse or cunning. There are thousands of ways, approved of men, from which woman's purer conscience and finer sense recoil. It is from such that your memory, next to your presence, will keep me."

"Well, I want quite as much from you. There are thousands of ways into which women are forced,—which are vain, poor, paltry! The good we do is so overlaid with frippery and ostentation, we are so flattered and fettered and silenced, and so misunderstood and condemned if we break away from conventions, that it is no wonder we appeal to broader views and more candid, more intelligent judgment, when we find them. May I begin now with what I want to tell you about the baroness?"

"Pray do," said Robert. "I have been speculating not a little about it."

"Well, then, she is not a common woman, as I need hardly say. Her features and her expression are evidence of that. A vicious or shallow life of fifty years *will* leave traces on expression and manner; but she is as fresh, as full of enthusiasm and sentiment, as a girl;

and her thoughts range over wide areas, and strike down to the roots of things. You may think it strange that I should say so; but I am sure they are governed by a conscience, peculiar, perhaps, but controlling. And though she is a thorough woman in her nature, she is a man in her methods. She left my father because, unreasonable in her demands upon him, she felt injured by what she fancied to be neglect and unkindness. Her mind was doubtless also disturbed by physical disease. It was an awful wrong, but I do not think she was fully responsible for it; and now it is her great wish to undo this error, so far as is possible, and to solace her punishment of isolation by attaching me to herself.

For my own part, in some reviews of the matter, I have wished that I had never met her. I was content with the friends I had; and they were content with me. But now it is not quite so. Mrs. Dysart has been to me all that a mother should be; and it is not to be wondered at if she sees some aspects of the affair in which my adhesion to the baroness would benefit her own children. Moreover, she is not at ease in repelling her; for both she and my father are in her power. If she chooses to do so, she can poison their lives with a grievous scandal, and, if provoked to reprisals, she might impoverish the family as well. I cannot tell you with what sadness I see the ties which have bound me to my family relaxing and dissolving. I have the forlorn feeling of being somehow an interloper where I have always been first in privilege and first in influence.

What shall I do, Mr. Audran? My parents loosen

the moorings of my life, the baroness pulls me out into the stream. I cannot force them to give me the first place in their hearts, and I am not yet ready to give to any others the first place in mine. With all the excuse which we may find for the baroness's error, the stigma of sin and shame remains with her; and if I openly condone it, I take some shadow of that stain upon myself. I must inculpate my father, whom I have always revered, if I accept her defence of her course toward him. I have no desire to leave my old life, to give up whatever I have gathered, and become at home in, to try new methods and a new country; and yet I *do* love the baroness, — there are so many things about her which are congenial to me; and there is no telling how great the influence of such a desire as hers may have upon its object. Indeed, it seems as though her motherly feeling, repressed for nearly thirty years, had been accumulating all that time, so intense and uncompromising is it now, when it first finds opportunity for expression."

"What does your father say, Helen?" asked Robert.

"He says — and there is certainly force in it — that the logic of events is against her; that her claim on my life, however much it might have affected my earlier years, cannot now control them; and that, although blinded by the eagerness of her purpose she expects or hopes to realize a great deal from it, yet she can have no more of me than she earns, so to speak, — and what she earns I shall readily give, — and that by and by she will see this, which now her vehement nature overlooks;

that, if soothed by compliance, she will become reasonable and tractable, and will yield to the force of circumstances; but that, if thwarted and roused, she may be able to make us all very unhappy, and set us and herself wrong with the world."

"And what does this temporary compliance involve?" said Robert.

"That I cannot tell as yet," she answered. "Probably I should do as she wishes for a while, until she finds how far my interests suit with hers, and when they conflict there will be no conflict, father thinks, if she is really attached to me; and, if she is not, then the force of her claim will be broken, and it can be resisted. My father will not see me sacrificed to her, if it comes to that. And, for me, it comes to this: Mrs. Dysart has been all that a mother need be to me, from my cradle. If it is in my power to avert from her and her children a scandal, — the scandal that she is not my father's wife, and that her marriage to a man whose former wife was living, undivorced, is not legal; if her children are thus wronged, and their fortune imperilled because of me, and I can avert both scandal and peril, and my father bids me do it, then I *must* do it. I should be an unfilial ingrate if I did not."

"Well," said Robert, "don't you see what the baroness is preparing for you? It is clear enough to my eyes. She will fix you in her sphere forever, if she can, by marrying you to the baron."

Helen smiled. "Will-he, nil-he, — will-I, nil-I, — without giving either of us a choice in that matter?"

"You, at least, shall have another choice — Helen! —there is no other way for me. I did not mean to ask this of you now. My regard for you is so great that I would not have you decide the most important question of life upon any insufficient knowledge. If I have ever allowed myself to dream that you might sometime incline to me with the whole breadth of your understanding and the whole force of that wonderful soul, it was a vision so sweet, so flattering, that I would not risk any premature attempt to realize it.

"I am inextricably entangled in a life which I scarcely dare ask that you will share. My fortune, my success, is in the future, and therefore uncertain. I have neither name nor place nor leisure nor pleasure to offer you; and I was going away, hoping only that I might have left upon your nature a trace something like as broad and deep as that which you have left on mine. If that were so, then, despite our separation, fancy and sympathy would grow into confidence, and consent would become covenant.

"But now you are in extremity. The life you were content to lead closes upon you; a life which, it may be you shrink from, compels you. I cannot leave the woman who is more to me than any other woman ever was, to float, to wander, to be driven by the will of others, if she will risk my faith and my fortune. Dear, delightful Helen, what say you?"

He was standing before her chair, had taken her unresisting hand, and was gazing down on her. And still

she sat with drooping head. He waited for a response; it did not come.

"Have you no answer for me, Helen?"

She tightened her grasp upon his hand as she lifted up her clear brown eyes, full of grace and truth. "Yes," said she, "I have an answer, if I can ever find the right words for it. There are some things I do know, Mr. Audran, and there are some things I don't know. I know that I am, as I ought to be, most proud and happy to hear these words from you. They are the most living words of life to me, for they tell me of the place I have in the thoughts of the man whom I like better than I like any other man. I do know that if, against your purpose and against your judgment, these words have been forced from you now, — if you have sacrificed the convictions with which you came here this evening, — it is for my sake: you give them up to stand between me and doubt and sorrow and chagrin. I take it for the best proof which the time could offer of your faith in me, and the best assurance that the regard which I have given and shall always give to you has been most worthily placed. I am better pleased with you than ever I was before, — and that was not necessary." A tear trembled in her eyes as she said it.

"Now you know what I think of you, and are prepared to hear me say that I cannot take your pledge, and I cannot give you mine.

"The reasons which you give for the conclusions which you have reached were good. You have said that you wanted me to choose you, if at all, with the

whole breadth of my understanding and the whole force of my feeling. And I do not want less. If you should ever be my husband, and I should need your compassion and protection, I know I should have them; but you must not offer to marry me to save me, at least, not from the ordinary trials of life. You have said that your undertaking is large, uncertain, anxious, and ought to have your undistracted thought. Whatever you want for yourself, I want for you, and I will not have you fettered and compromised now. These are the reasons why I will not take your pledge. And the reason why I cannot give you mine is that I never mean to marry any man until I am quite sure in my own mind that I can make him happy and that he can make me so.

"Oh, yes; I have thought a great deal about it, sir; and I have waited a long time for such a man. Supposing that he has at length come along, found me, and sought me, he never would believe I had been coy all my days if I could be had for the first asking, on a week's acquaintance. The very reason which has made you speak what you did not mean to say is a reason why I should appeal from Philip excited to Philip sedate.

"I am in difficulty. There are ties of blood, of nurture, of obligation, — there are anxieties, fears, and hopes, — which centre around me, and I must get my bearings toward them. I must not pledge myself now, if by so doing I impose difficulties upon others. I cannot take myself out of the field and leave them involved. However difficult and precarious the adjustment may be, I am sure it cannot well be made without me. I must

not evade or desert the issue of which I am the cause. If I did, and ill should come of it, with what face could I return to my father's house, or how present there a man who had led me to desert it when most it needed my help?

"No; home shall not be clouded or compromised by act of mine, or for my sake; nor will I carry a cloud into any man's house. These are the reasons why I cannot give you my pledge. So, Robert, go away now. We are both free. Time will show whether there is to be any other tie between us than those of friendship and esteem." She rose as she spoke, and took his two hands in hers. "Do not think I can ever forget how these two hands once lifted me out of the abyss of a horrible death, and have to-night been stretched out to shield me from all that may annoy and trouble. Brave hands, kind hands, clean hands!" And she lifted them to her lips and kissed them.

It was the impulse of an instant, and the arms which she had dropped were just ready to close around her shoulders, when her own white palm was pressed firmly against Robert's chest.

"No, no!" said she. "Mr. Audran forgets himself — he forgets what I have said, and I must go from him"; and her look of fond reproach staggered and stayed him.

"Don't go, Helen!" he said huskily. "You are so pitilessly sweet!" He closed his repulsed hands over his burning eyes a moment, then, dropping them, he added, "I *had* forgotten myself; but you don't know

how hard it is to stand face to face and hand in hand with you, and not to kiss you, and not to make you my own, for one moment at least. I am tired of the struggle, Helen, — I am tired of my self-control, — I am tired of yours!"

"Then I certainly shall go," said she, "and you certainly will not hinder. But you are not tired, Robert, and I am not afraid of this untimely fondness. You know how to keep your esteem for me and for yourself clear of the spell of a passing emotion. When you have cleared your face and made your voice smooth you may kiss my hands, too, and say good-by; and you may come again, as soon and as often as you like."

"May I write to you, Helen?"

"Certainly," said she; "you cannot tell me about your plans to-night, and I must know what they are and how they prosper."

"Well, then, Helen, good-by, good-by! You have done with me just what you would."

He kissed her hands with a long kiss, and once again and again as they parted at the door.

He went to his room and she to hers. As she let down her soft and rippling hair, she murmured with Thekla, —

> "Du Heilige, rufe dein Kind zurück!
> Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück,
> Ich habe gelebt und geliebet!"

CHAPTER XII.

A CHANGE OF SCENE.

ON the morning of the 8th of July Mr. Audran left Interlaken; on the morning of the 9th he was picking his way along the Rue Vivienne toward the shop of a famous Parisian lapidary, to whom he exhibited a certain oval pebble.

The man ground a facet on one end, and said, "This is some kind of close-grained flint. It will bear a high polish, but may flaw in working. It has no commercial value, but is curious, nevertheless, for it is divided lengthwise through the middle by a layer of very pure white, of the same grain and about five millimetres thick."

"I should like to see it," said Robert.

"You can return, then, in an hour; I will cut it through in that time."

When Robert came back the stone lay in halves,—one elliptical surface black, the other snow-white, and both as smooth as glass. Robert made a little sketch of an ornament and gave it to the man, with Walter's address, in care of the American consul at Geneva.

On the evening of the 11th he was on board the White Star steamer at Liverpool, and on the evening of the 21st at the Hoffman House in New York.

When Mr. Dysart entered his office the next morning he found a package of letters on his desk and Mr. R. Audran's card, announcing that he would call at any hour Mr. Dysart might appoint. Mr. Dysart immediately telegraphed an invitation to dine with him at Delmonico's at 3 P. M., and accompany him to Glenwood for the night, after which he sent one of his clerks up the river with the letters which Mr. Audran had brought, and a note to Julia, informing her that he should bring Robert with him.

At three o'clock they met. "Mr. Audran," said the host, as he unfolded his napkin, "it was a very great surprise to me to get your card this morning. It is only three or four days since the arrival of our last letters, in which we were told that you were about starting on some excursion from Lucerne, — and here you are! I hope no unpleasant occurrence has brought you home."

Robert did not answer for a moment. He was looking for a likeness between the father and his daughter. Mr. Dysart was tall, very erect, of large frame, somewhat spare. His fresh face was cleanly shaven except for a long white mustache, and his deep-set black eyes were shaded by very black eyebrows. He was faultlessly dressed, as a man of thirty-five might dress; and indeed it would have been difficult for a stranger to decide whether he were an old man at forty or a very young man at sixty.

"No," said Robert, "it was a favorable opening in my own affairs that brought me home. My partner and I are going to buy more property and make payment on

the 24th, through your house. I assure you I was very sorry to leave Switzerland so abruptly as I did; but the matter developed suddenly, and my partner telegraphed me to be in New York to make this settlement of the 24th."

"I am very glad that you met Mrs. Dysart and Helen and Eugene. They say that you saved Helen from a very great danger, — some breaking of a bridge, was it?"

"Not exactly," said Robert. "Miss Dysart had separated from the rest of the party and ventured upon a timber which overhung a deep and rocky basin. A log was thrown from above over the fall, and struck and dislodged that on which Miss Dysart was standing. I happened to reach her in time to lift her off before she fell with it. She suffered no injury beyond a dislocation of the left shoulder, which was reduced on the spot, and had nearly ceased to trouble her when I left."

"And it is now a fortnight since you left?" said Mr. Dysart.

"Yes; I left on the 8th. It was two weeks last evening since Mrs. Dysart gave us a dinner on the eve of my departure."

"Yes," said Mr. Dysart, "she wrote about that dinner. Eugene was master of ceremonies, I believe. I must hear more about it, and so must Julia. But here comes our soup. We will, if you please, keep your story for the evening at Glenwood; and now tell me if I can serve you in this business of yours."

"Yes," said Robert, "I think you may. I have to

raise ten thousand dollars, and the collateral which I offer is the railroad bonds which we discussed when I was here some weeks since. I have enough of those, probably, — fifteen. Shall I have any trouble in effecting a loan?"

"Give yourself no concern about it, my dear sir. We shall be very ready to hold your collateral; but if you will take a line from me to the Trust Company, they will give you money at a lower rate. The thing can be done in fifteen minutes, and you will only have to draw upon them for the amount."

"I am greatly indebted to you," said Robert.

"Don't mention it. I am going to ask a favor of you in my turn. You remember those mining men about whom you cautioned me, — Mohler and David. Your caution was very just; I wish I might have had it before I committed myself to them. They are giving me trouble, and I want to get, through you, some more information about them and their operations."

The matter which Mr. Dysart thus mentioned requires a brief explanation. About a year before the date of our story, two miners, by name Mohler and David, had found a very promising lode of galena, having large quantities of silver, in the mountains near Mr. Audran's ranch. To the development of it they gave months of labor and a very considerable amount of money, — all that they could command; and they had prospered to such a degree that their mine was clearly shown to be one capable of being worked to fair profit by the aid of large capital, but which, managed in a smaller way, would

hardly pay. There was, however, a strong prospect of soon reaching a body of much richer ore if they could obtain means to continue the work. They had therefore employed some experts, who were at the time investigating other mines in the interest of New York capitalists, to examine and report upon this. The opinion of the experts confirmed their hopes, and the outline and materials for a detailed report, to be made up when the surveyors should return to New York, were obtained. Provided with these notes, and specimens, maps, and plans of the mine, Mohler had gone to New York to secure the necessary money. He had been directed to Mr. Dysart, as a banker whose knowledge of mining would prepare him to deal intelligently with the matter.

Mr. Dysart had at first refused to take any interest in the affair, but being prevailed upon to read the notes of the engineers, was so far impressed by them as to call upon them at their New York office, and from their statements in detail had become convinced that there was good promise of profit in the mine. The miners were so intent on going on with their work that they offered Mr. Dysart a controlling interest in the property for a sum considerably less than they themselves had already expended. It was a very speculative operation for Mr. Dysart, and the terms were by no means exceptionally hard upon the miners. They had delivered the maps and plans, the records of location, and the articles of agreement, and had received an advance of money, and Mohler was about to leave New York to return to Colorado, when he happened to meet Mr. Audran, then

just starting for Europe, and had referred Mr. Dysart to him as one acquainted with the country and themselves.

Robert had confirmed many points of their story, and given Mr. Dysart much valuable information; but had felt obliged to state that, though he knew nothing against Mohler and David, he had been prejudiced against them because they had taken into their employ and, as reported, had associated with themselves in business a man whom Robert had driven off from his own place as a thorough rascal.

This man — Jim Dunphy — was a native of New York, a wharf-rat as a boy, a bounty-jumper during the war; and, when New York had become too hot to hold him, had gone to the mining regions of the West, working sometimes in the gulches, but generally hanging about the temporary termini of advancing railroads. The vigilance committees of Kearney, Julesburg, and Cheyenne knew Jim Dunphy well. He had been one of the terrors of Denver and Black Hawk; and when driven away in turn from each, had worked his way down to Mr. Audran's ranch, and plundered his simple herdmen at cards. Robert had found him out, compelled him to restore his plunder and to quit the neighborhood. He went off vowing vengeance, and when next heard from, it was as employed by and interested with Mohler and David in their mine. Like master, like man, Robert fancied; so he warned Mr. Dysart not to trust too much to the honesty of Mohler and David.

During Robert's absence, with the aid of Mr. Dysart's

capital, the miners had reached the expected deposit of rich ore, and now bitterly repented of their contract to deliver to Mr. Dysart the larger part of that which now appeared to them a veritable bonanza. How to get out of this obligation was the theme of endless scheming. They began by attempting to weary and disgust Mr. Dysart with his venture by sending frequent reports of difficulties and disappointments. They learned that the deeds of sale had not as yet been received for record in the office of the clerk of El Paso County; and just before Robert's return to New York, they had sent their associate, Dunphy, to New York to carry out this programme. He was to give Mr. Dysart a discouraging report of the work, to tempt him with the offer of the return of a portion of his money, and cautiously to raise this bid until convinced that no compromise was possible and the deeds would not be restored. In this event, Dunphy said, he would be, well — forever wretched — if he did n't have 'em anyhow.

He had learned that Robert was to buy the Maritana estate, and to that end would be at Mr. Dysart's office on the 24th of July. He reasoned that, as Robert lived so near and was so able a man, Mr. Dysart would naturally wish to gather information from or through him, and perhaps to constitute him his agent or representative.

Dunphy arrived in New York on the same day with Robert, and Mr. Dysart received a call from him shortly before he went out to keep his appointment for dinner. The result of the interview was to impress upon the

banker that the miner was a sharper, and upon the miner that the banker was not a flat. Mr. Dysart declined to take any immediate action, and closed the conference with the remark, "I am going now to dine with a gentleman from Colorado who knows something of this property. I will see what he has to say, and you may call again day after to-morrow."

The prospect was not an encouraging one, but Dunphy determined to know whatever could be found out of the conference between Messrs. Dysart and Audran. He kept watch on the banker's movements, and saw him receive Robert at Delmonico's. Assuming that dinner would require at least an hour, he returned at the end of that time, and took his position near the door from which they must issue to reach their carriage, and he heard Mr. Dysart say, "We shall miss the train if I go back for those papers now; but if you will come up again to-morrow night we will look them over together."

"Exactly," said Mr. Dunphy to himself; "that is, if you don't happen to lose them before you get there. I reckon I 'd better see how things are fixed all round."

He hastened after the retreating carriage until he spied a vacant cab, into which he jumped, and, bidding the driver keep a little behind, followed to the station. He entered a car behind theirs, buying a ticket for Tarrytown, the train happening to be a Tarrytown special.

When the train stopped at Glenwood station, Mr. Dysart recognized his carriage, and his daughter in it. He

presented Robert to Julia, — a tall and brilliant brunette, five or six years younger than her sister, and very handsomely dressed in black silk, with a white carriage-cloak and parasol, and a white-plumed hat.

"I knew Julia would be so impatient to get the news that I sent all the letters up to her this morning," he explained. "Most of them were for her, in fact. I had only a long one from my wife and a short one from Helen."

"Oh," cried Julia, "I had one from everybody, — mamma, Helen, Eugene, and Alice Carroll. Papa sent all six out to me. I got them at twelve, and, as you may imagine, have had a very exciting afternoon. It is very kind of you, Mr. Audran, to come up and tell us all about them. You will, won't you?"

"Julia, I want Mr. Audran to stay with us while he is in town. You must do your best to persuade him. How long do you remain, Mr. Audran?"

"I shall have business at your banking-house on the 24th, day after to-morrow; and so soon as that is done I must leave for Colorado."

"Then you will have only to-morrow to give us," said Julia. "What a pity!"

"Hardly that, even," said Robert, "for I must go to New Haven to-morrow, and, as I said, if I can finish my business on Friday, must take the train for the West that evening."

"You must certainly come up for to-morrow night, then," said Mr. Dysart. "You can get back from New Haven in time for the train at 6.30, which brings

you to our house by eight; that is not late of a summer evening."

"Thanks. I will do so with pleasure."

They were speeding along the river road behind a pair of fine horses, and now reached Mr. Dysart's summer house, — one of the most attractive in the neighborhood. It stood three or four hundred feet from the road, on a green slope fronting the river, and the approach was bordered with well-grown and trim hedges.

Every stage of their progress had been observed from a distance by Mr. Dunphy. He had lost sight of them for a time when they drove away from the station; but having learned the whereabouts of Mr. Dysart's house, was reconnoitring the premises, half an hour later, with an experienced eye. After spending some time in that occupation, he took a late train for New York.

Julia meanwhile had done the honors of the well-appointed supper-table, after which the trio adjourned to a pretty little parlor, where Mr. Audran recounted to eager listeners most of the incidents of the foregoing history, withholding, of course, all significant passages between himself and Helen. He was embarrassed in speaking of the baroness, who, as it appeared, had formed almost the sole subject of Helen's letters to her father and sister. Both Mr. Dysart and Julia were intensely interested to hear more about her, and from an unbiassed source.

"I beg you will speak with perfect freedom," said Mr. Dysart. "I shall be only too happy to have your

judgment of her, and particularly if it is favorable. Tell us first how she looks."

"You tell me," said Robert, "that she is nearly fifty; but except for her very white hair, I should have thought her not more than thirty-five. She is very erect and stately, very clear of complexion and smooth of feature, a little stouter, perhaps, than she may have been, but still very elastic and active. Her voice is particularly sweet and sympathetic. You should have heard her sing at our little dinner-party. It was a beautiful song of Béranger's, 'The Shooting Stars.' The refrain is, 'Qui file, et file, et disparait.' It was exquisite."

"And how is she as to manners and conversation?" said Julia.

"I should say that she had great ability," answered Robert. "She speaks several languages well; her English, particularly, is so good that you would believe it to be her native tongue. She is evidently very well educated, and is never at a loss. Under the most difficult circumstances, and even when her feelings are excited, she is always dignified and elegant."

"Did she not strike you as an artful person?" questioned Julia.

"She seems," said Robert, "like one who has purposes and plans, and yet who is very frank about them. It would appear as if nothing ever comes into her mind which she is afraid or ashamed to show."

"She must be a remarkable woman, indeed," said Julia, "if she can fascinate and beguile my sister. Helen is very clear-headed, and always goes directly to

the point. She is not easily taken in, and it puzzles me extremely that she should seem to accept and approve this equivocal or unequivocal woman. Do you think the baroness is really fond of Helen?"

"I remember," said Robert, "a remark of your sister's. She said, 'The baroness is not a common woman, — her features and expression show that. When a woman is fifty years of age, and has led a weak or vicious or shallow life, it will leave some trace on expression and manner; but she is as fresh and full of enthusiasm as a girl, and her thoughts range over wide areas and go down to the roots of things.' Those, I believe, were her very words. But the baroness is without doubt fond of your sister, — very fond and very proud."

"How *do* they bear it?" said Julia impatiently.

"It seemed to me," said Robert, "that the first feeling of all the party was one of distrust and repugnance at being associated with a person of the baroness's antecedents. It was certainly a hard task which she set herself, to overcome all their prejudice; but gradually she seems to have won her way to the sympathy and confidence of every one, and I thought, in a great measure, to their real esteem also. I can hardly believe that she would have done so if she had not inspired them with a belief of the goodness of her heart."

"And how much do you think she will exact or expect of Helen?" said Julia.

"I cannot tell," answered he. "All that she can get; of that I am sure."

"And what is the baron like?"

"The baron is still in early middle life, a distinguished soldier, a very fine-looking person, and devoted to his sister. He is a Deputy of the French Assembly, a Republican, and has some anticipations of diplomatic service in America."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Dysart. "He is a man of mark, then. Is he also a man of fortune?"

"I can only guess," said Robert. "I have seen a sketch of the château at or near Colmar, where they live. It seems a fine property. He has succeeded to the title, and, the baroness says, to half the estate, the remainder belonging to herself. There was nothing of the ostentation of wealth about either of them, — in fact, no allusion to it; but there was all the liberality and elegance of appointment which comes of easy circumstances."

"You said that the baroness sang," said Julia. "She is accomplished, then?"

"Yes," said Robert; "she sings well and draws beautifully; the baron told me that she is an excellent horsewoman; and I know that she is well versed in art and literature."

"Did the baron seem to share her views as to Helen?" said Mr. Dysart.

"The baron is so much a man of the world that it is not easy to know exactly what his views are. He was most courteous and respectful to all the ladies, and evidently very much impressed by your sister."

"I cannot help wondering," said Julia, "whether he

has any desire to make a baroness of Helen. I suppose you cannot relieve our minds on that head, Mr. Audran?"

"I certainly cannot," answered Robert, laughing.

"Well, what does Alice say about it? She is not so discreet as you."

"Miss Alice said nothing about it in my hearing; but if I were to guess, I should say she was not so favorably impressed with the baron and baroness as are the rest of the party. Naturally, she received less attention from them, and they were less anxious to win her good opinion."

"Did you see any likeness between Helen and her mother?" said Mr. Dysart.

"Yes," replied Robert, "a striking likeness, not only in person but in mind and in manner. I do not mean to say that the baroness is equal to Miss Dysart."

"I should hope not," cried Julia.

"You may have the opportunity of forming your own opinion, I fancy," said Robert. "It was clear to me that both the baron and his sister took pains to intimate their intention of perhaps coming to America; and I am convinced that if that were the only way in which the baroness could maintain relations with your sister, she would not hesitate for a moment to do so."

"Dear me!" said Julia. "What on earth should we do with her? How could we know her without countenancing her, — and how could we countenance her without losing our own position, in our own eyes, and in hers, and in the world's."

"I think that will be more clear to you when you come to know her. She has too much force and originality to depend upon any position which is merely accorded to her. She would have her own resources, social and of every other kind."

"Well," said Julia, "I am in despair. Nobody seems to think about this woman as I should suppose they would. It seems to me that abhorrence of her past life and disgust at her present pretensions would be the natural sentiment of all of us; instead of which all — my mother even — accept her history, are full of apologies for her behavior, and one and all are ready to give her whatever she asks. I cannot understand it, and I don't like it. I had hoped that Mr. Audran, at least, would be free to denounce her, but he speaks of her just as respectfully as the rest." She paused, evidently in great excitement, then began again.

"Never mind if I am not expected to speak, — I must!" she cried. "Mr. Audran, you have rendered the greatest service conceivable to us and to Helen. Helen is very chary and reserved in what she says of you; but Alice is not so reticent, and Alice says that Helen has the greatest regard for you, and you, apparently, for her. How am I to understand it, — that you appear so much interested in allowing the baroness to dispose of Helen just as she pleases, — marrying her to the baron if she likes?"

"Julia! Julia!" said her father, "you have no right to ask Mr. Audran such questions, and he is under no obligation to answer them. You know how much Helen

herself would resent what you have just said, and how annoying it must be to Mr. Audran. I am really shocked at you, child!"

"Do forgive me!" said Julia. "I suppose it was outrageous, papa, but I have been half wild all day. Mr. Audran, I am very impertinent, and you may say so plainly if you like."

"Not impertinent so far as it concerns myself," said Robert; "but if I have won any place in your sister's good opinion, Miss Julia, I must take care not to risk it by assuming any influence which she has not conceded."

"Well," said Julia, "I hope I know when I have been sufficiently schooled. It is better that I should retire, and digest my lesson. Good-night, Mr. Audran, — I shall get over my crossness before morning; and good-night, papa." —

"I am very glad to believe," said Mr. Dysart, "that both my wife and Helen take a more reasonable view of this matter than Julia. The easiest way out of such complications is the best. I cannot be very angry with a woman who gave me my liberty in asserting her own. It has been the dark spot in my life that my neglect and coldness should have driven her to an untimely death, and it is an immense relief in one way to know not only that she lives, but that I have not ruined her life, — that she has found a growth and happiness for herself to which I never should have led her. Manuela was always gentle and magnanimous, and there was much in me as a husband for her to pardon and

forget. Of course the idea that she can assert any control over Helen which Helen herself does not accept is absurd. Her wish for her child is a natural one; in fact, every one must think better of her for having it."

"It is a matter upon which, of course, I can express no opinion," said Robert; "but, Mr. Dysart, so much has been said that I think it proper to add that my brief acquaintance with your daughter led me to feel an interest in her such as I have never felt for any other woman. She knows it, for I have told her so; and all that I have won from her in reply is that she regards me as a valued friend, whose sentiments time must be allowed to ripen and to prove; and she spoke with such decision that I was obliged to accept her conclusion. Of course it is to you only that I could venture to confide this, and to declare my intention of commending myself to her as best I can. You may very naturally feel that a man placed as I am has hardly a right to aspire to Miss Dysart; and as I would not seem too presumptuous, I must ask leave to tell you something of my affairs. I have a fair prospect of business success in Colorado. My partner and myself are about to double our investment in stock, and in so doing we shall become prominent among the cattle-farmers of our State,—a business which has proved lucrative to almost everybody engaged in it so far. I am also told that, in my absence, and without my instance, some chance of public and political preferment has been suggested for me."

"My dear sir," replied Mr. Dysart, "I would not and

shall not control my daughter's choice, and I cannot yet tell you how far I may try to influence it; but I am bound to express my sense of the manly and honorable way in which you have dealt with me, and, I believe, with her. If she has said that time only can determine your sentiments and hers, I recognize an honesty and a good sense which I am apt to find in all she says and does."

CHAPTER XIII.

GLENWOOD AND JULIA.

WHEN Mr. Audran came down the next morning, he found Julia on the southern piazza, picking the dead leaves from the flower-baskets. Bright sunlight filtered through the woodbine, long, velvet-soft tree-shadows fell across the lawn; below, the river shone in gold. But the young day was not more fresh and alluring than the maiden with her fresh cambric robe and shining morning face.

"I was very fractious and impatient last night," she said, by way of greeting; "but I have come to my senses this morning. What good would there be in my standing out all alone by myself?"

"You certainly misunderstood me," said Robert, "if you thought me interested to secure the success of Madame Waldeyer's scheme. Nothing could be further from the truth. I wished only to make her seem less disagreeable in case she should succeed. I am sure your sister feels that her wishes cannot be altogether disregarded and herself rejected, and your father and mother are of the same opinion. If that be so, is it not better to get what pleasure you can from the situation?"

"Do you think the baron and baroness will continue to pursue them from place to place as they go through Switzerland?"

"I don't feel sure as to that. They will not be likely to do anything which would make themselves unacceptable to your sister and her friends. Consider, Miss Julia. You question me now, but from this day forward you will have more and better means of information than I. How many times I shall long to know what you know when knowledge will be impossible for me!"

"Shall you want very much to know?" asked Julia archly.

"Very much indeed," said Robert quietly.

"You are going to your home in Colorado, you say, Mr. Audran. Shall you remain there?"

"Certainly, until I am called elsewhere."

"And when are you to be in New York again?"

"That I cannot tell; it must depend on circumstances."

"They will all be at home in November, you know. You will come on then, won't you?"

"I hope I may."

Just then came the summons to breakfast. Julia was vexed at the interruption. "Mr. Audran, you are most provoking. You know very well that I want to find out what there is between you and Helen."

"Well, Miss Julia, you may assume anything you please of me, and I shall not have the least objection to your getting any information from your sister which she is willing to give."

"Time and trains wait for no man," said Mr. Dysart, from the hall-door. "Julia, it is going to be very warm to-day, and since Mr. Audran is not to be in town, I think I shall come up by the three o'clock train. Apropos, Mr. Audran, where are your bonds?"

"In the Park Bank," said Robert.

"Then you need not go down town at all unless you care to do so. Write an order to the bank to deliver them to the Union Trust Company as collateral on a loan of $10,000, — the amount to be deposited to your order on the Park Bank. I will make all the negotiations, and you shall have the money at four per cent. Come! we must make haste with our breakfast."

Robert was glad to accept the proposal. The city, on that hot day, offered no attractions; so the gentlemen parted at the station, Robert taking the New Haven train. "I will come up as early as I can," were his last words; and Mr. Dysart's, "And I will bring all those papers about my affair."

Meantime Mr. Dunphy had hunted up a "Faker."— not a Hindoo saint, by any means, but a trim, nice-looking boy of seventeen, dextrous in pocket-picking and sharp at all evil practices. Shortly after Mr. Dysart reached his office the boy entered, and asked for Mr. Foxton. The clerk knew no such person. The boy then stated that Mr. Foxton was a gentleman from the West, who was going to England, and was to meet a Mr. Audran at Mr. Dysart's office. His (the boy's) mother had been Mr. Foxton's nurse in England, and wanted to see him. Might he wait awhile, on the chance of Mr. Foxton's coming in?

This was permitted. Mr. Dysart came and went, arranging Robert's business and attending to other matters, but still the boy did not move. From behind a newspaper he watched everything narrowly. About two o'clock Mr. Dysart, who had been absent for an hour, returned, and presently, taking the safe-key, unlocked an interior compartment, took thence a package and placed it in the breast-pocket of his coat. At this the boy got up, saying he could wait no longer, and went out to report to Mr. Dunphy, who was lurking in a doorway on the other side of the street.

When Mr. Dysart came out, a little later, the pair followed him at a distance, until at the Astor House he caught a car just leaving for the Grand Central Station. The boy hastened forward, and, hustling Mr. Dysart on the platform, attempted to reach his breast-pocket, but failed. Mr. Dysart walked to the upper end of the car and took a seat next the door. It was impossible to reach his pocket without notice. Again, when he alighted, at either door of the station and at the door of the car, the attempt was renewed and was unsuccessful. The boy came back chagrined to Dunphy, who had seated himself in another car. They hurried out, and Dunphy wrote a few lines on a scrap of paper, as follows: "Take the 18-foot boat and large spritsail, 2 pair oars, 2 yards black cambric, 2 feed-bags, 2 cod-lines, Colts. Shady. Be within call of two willows, quarter of a mile above Glenwood Station, at 9. Get the Badger." Then he returned to the car behind that in which Mr. Dysart sat, and the boy went his way down

42d Street to the North River, and along the bank until he reached a shanty, before which lay a stanch but light boat, and in it a man at work upon some fishing-tackle. The boy handed the note to this man, who glanced at it and said, "Run down to the car stable and tell Barney the Badger to come up here, quick."

When the Badger arrived, they entered upon a discussion of the note, the result of which was that Dunphy expected them to meet him with a well-equipped boat, and material for masks and for gagging and binding two people.

"He means that we shall carry revolvers, Bill. That looks like biz."

"He don't mean to be nabbed if the snap of a cap will clear him," pleasantly answered Bill.

"I reckon we 'd better take a bottle of chloroform along, to make the inside of them bags smell good. There 's no use being cruel when there ain't no need on it," said the Badger.

"You go and buy the kit, Barney, and I 'll get the boat ready. We must be off right away, for the tide 's agin us, and we 've got to make twenty miles before sundown; but the tide 's right to bring us home easy, and that 's the main point."

At seven that evening the boys who were bathing off the docks at Yonkers hailed a small boat careening under a large sail and standing northward. An hour later the sail was furled, the mast unshipped and laid down, and two men were apparently fishing, while a boy

with oars kept the boat off a wooded point above Glenwood. Half an hour later Dunphy hailed the boat, and was taken on board to complete the preparations and the programme. He pointed out the house on the hillside, with a background of trees and an open lawn in front. It was not more than three hundred yards from where the boat lay.

"Boys," said he, "this ain't no burglary job. What I want is a batch of papers out of the pocket of an old man up yonder. I reckoned we'd have to tackle two on 'em, but 't aint so. T' other one hain't come up yet, and he can't get here now afore ten o'clock, if he comes at all. We'll get up to the house now, Bill and I. Barney, you stay in the boat, take the oars from that kid, and stand ready to start her out lively as soon as we tumble aboard. The windows is all open, and the old feller was sitting on the piazzy just now. We'll work up behind that hedge on the north side of the house, and if we can see him anywhere we'll make a dash at him. Bill, you'll hold his arms, and I'll go through him. If we can't find the papers, we must carry the old man off and keep him in Tom Houlihan's crib till he squeals. But we must n't hurt him if we can help it."

The two ruffians crept along behind the evergreen hedge, unobserved, to a point from which they could look through the open windows of the lighted house about sixty feet distant. Dunphy produced a small saw, with which he cut through the stems of three or four cedar-bushes without displacing them. A push would

throw them down, and leave an opening sufficient for two men to pass. Elsewhere the hedge was impassable, and he counted on an easy retreat from pursuers, who would not be able to get near him unless they lighted upon the narrow opening which he had made.

We must now leave these worthies for a moment, to follow the movements of Mr. Audran. He had gone to New Haven, expecting to reach the city on his return about five o'clock, and to take the six o'clock train for Glenwood. But he had missed his train at New Haven, and was obliged to wait until five for another, which was not due in the city until eight. Vexed at the disappointment, he telegraphed that he should take the nine o'clock train from New York.

Julia was greatly disappointed, and went to the piano to console herself and pass away the time. Mr. Dysart, to escape distraction, retreated to the dining-room with his newspaper. Robert was due now in half an hour, and he bethought himself to look over the papers which they meant to examine together. Drawing his chair to the table, he turned his back to the window and spread out the papers before him. The day had been very warm, though after nightfall a pyramid of black cloud had begun to rise in the west. The air was heavy and still; there was no wind on the earth below, but the dark masses above were rolled and crowded by an upper current. Now and then, through some break in the clouds, the bright moon shone down upon the trembling river, the quivering trees, and the cattle crouching in the silent pastures; these transient gleams

but served to make the prevailing darkness more intense.

Dunphy and his accomplice had just gotten a view of Mr. Dysart and his employment, and were preparing for an assault, when the whistle of the incoming train was heard.

"We must do it this minute, Bill," cried Dunphy, "or there may be another chap to tackle, and then we 'll have to wait two hours and have no such chance."

Mr. Dysart heard the whistle, rose, and walked to the window facing the gap in the hedge where the men lay, and stood there. They could not move without attracting his attention.

"Damnation!" muttered Dunphy. "If we stir now, he 'll grab his papers and dodge."

Mr. Dysart showed no disposition to budge, but for full fifteen minutes stood gazing out into the darkness beyond the strand of light which, from behind his tall figure, fell through the open window and streamed full upon the lawn and hedge. At length, thinking Robert might be approaching from the opposite corner of the lawn, he turned to go toward the door. Robert, two hundred yards distant in the darkness, saw him pass the western window; the next instant he noticed the hedge beyond the house shake violently in the windless air; some bushes were thrown down, two men sprang through the gap and crept toward the piazza. Robert quickened his steps; he saw them mount the piazza and reach the full-length window. He shouted, "Thieves!

thieves!" and rushed toward the house. As he rushed through the window, Mr. Dysart lay rolling on the floor, with a meal-bag pulled down over his head, and pinioned by one ruffian, while another was sweeping together the papers on the table. Beside the papers lay a pistol. With one bound Robert had seized the pistol. "Run, Bill!" shouted the miscreant; and as he himself sprang through one window, Bill sprang through another. A ball from Robert's pistol cut Dunphy's ear as he leaped from the piazza.

Robert waited but for an instant, to pull the bag from Mr. Dysart's head, and then rushed forward in pursuit; but the men had already gained an advance of nearly a hundred yards.

"Drop those papers, Dunphy!" shouted Robert.

"See you damned first, Audran!" yelled Dunphy, as he climbed the wall at the bottom of the lawn, and a second bullet from Robert's pistol whizzed by his head.

Barney had backed the stern of the boat against the low shore, and sat with balanced oars. Bill reached it first, for Dunphy had stumbled beneath the wall. Robert was gaining on him, but he saw that in the short distance it was impossible that he should overtake them. He had clutched a big stone as he climbed the wall, and now he threw it with all his force. It struck Dunphy between the shoulders just as he was steadying himself to step into the boat, and tumbled him headlong across the thwart upon his comrades. With a rapid stroke from Barney the boat shot out into the river, and

Bill raised his bruised and bleeding partner from the thwart on which he lay.

"Damned if I don't kill him!" growled Dunphy, as he wiped his bleeding face. "Give us your pistol!"

But the boat was now far from the shore, and shot after shot passed harmless over Robert, who had dropped upon the ground with the first. He counted the reports, — one — two — three — four — five. "He is saving his last charge," thought Robert, as Dunphy called, "Back water, Barney. I'll plug him!" But a well-directed shot from Robert's pistol now sung over Barney's head, and he pulled more fiercely out into the stream.

Lights were crossing the lawn, the coachman and the gardener were coming at a run, and the thieves contented themselves with their booty and their escape.

Next moment the servants came up, followed by Mr. Dysart.

"You are not hurt, Mr. Audran?"

"No, thank you. Nor you?"

"No, thank *you*," said Mr. Dysart. "Are they off? What shall we do next?"

"Telegraph to the city police, I should say," answered Robert. "Have they got anything of value?"

"All the papers about the mine, including the contract upon which I advanced money."

"Is your money lost, then?" said Robert.

"Really, I don't know," said Mr. Dysart; "but at any rate I have been beaten and robbed by a pair of scoundrels. I'll have them yet."

"Well," said Mr. Audran, "shall we go down to the station and write the despatch?"

One of the servants was sent back to reassure Julia, and they hastened on their errand.

"You know the fellows, Mr. Audran?"

"Yes, I know one. It was, as you suppose, Dunphy, the tool and accomplice of Mohler and David."

"Of course, then, what they have got was what they came for. Now they must hold it, if it is to serve them. What will this fellow be likely to do next?"

"Go home and report, I should say," said Robert. "If he can once get safely to Colorado, he will count on defying process or arrest."

"I 'll follow him," said Mr. Dysart, "and I 'll see for myself where my money has gone, as I ought to have done in the first place."

Telegrams were sent to the police of New York, Brooklyn, and Jersey City, giving description of Dunphy; then the two gentlemen returned to the house.

"The business of the evening," said Mr. Dysart, "being unavoidably postponed, we may as well give what is left to Julia."

Julia was, of course, greatly alarmed, but she put great restraint upon herself lest her fears might compromise the plans of the gentlemen; and when her father said, "I am going to Colorado, to-morrow night, with Mr. Audran," she replied bravely, "If you must go, I am glad it is in such company. May I ask Mr. and Mrs. Benlow and her sister to come up and stay with me while you are gone?"

"By all means. I hope they will come," said Mr. Dysart.

"And now," said Julia, "I shall have an adventure to report to mother and Helen quite equal to any of theirs. And as you, Mr. Audran, play the leading *rôle* in both, you will figure as the hero of two hemispheres and the champion of the Dysart family. I declare, it is embarrassing. What ever are we going to do for you, to repay all that you have done for us?"

"Wait, if you please, till I demand payment, and then we will see."

"But there ought to be a little scene here and now," said Julia. "If there is not, I shall always feel that I did not 'rise to the occasion' as I ought. Mr. Audran has saved my father from what might well have been his death, just as he saved my sister, — and I am bidden to wait, and not thank him!" The attempt to cover her tremor of excitement by raillery ended in a passion of tears.

"Well," said Robert, "there can certainly nothing more be said now, Miss Julia. The most exacting person could ask no greater reward than your smiles and your tears. You are not exactly like your sister, but you are a most perfect complement of her; and to have known you both, and to have a place in your memory, is reward enough for any man or anything. Mr. Dysart, if I had daughters I should wish that they might be like yours."

"'These are my jewels,'" said the proud father. "But it is twelve o'clock now, and we have to leave at

half-past seven. You will go with us to town, Julia, and carry your own invitation to the Benlows?"

"Yes, please; and so I will say good-night to you both."

About the same time, or somewhat later, Mr. Dunphy got ashore between Hoboken and Jersey City, worked his way round into the freight-yard of the Erie Railway, climbed between two cars of an out-going freight-train, and stole a somewhat precarious and rough, but on the whole a satisfactory, ride as far as Paterson. It was nearly daylight when he reached that city, unobserved; and, quitting his place, he found soon after a barber and a breakfast, and took a first-class passage on the morning western express. "About now," said he, "them cops will be looking for me round Cortlandt Street."

The programme made at Glenwood was fully realized next day. By three o'clock Julia had secured her visitors, Mr. Dysart had put detectives on the track of the thieves, Robert was in possession of the title to the Maritana estate, the Foxtons had received their price as agreed upon, and Mr. Dysart and Julia had left for Glenwood.

Robert spent the remainder of the day in making purchases for Colorado and in writing letters, and at eight P. M. was seated in a section of a sleeping-car, where he was joined by Mr. Dysart when the train reached Poughkeepsie. Mr. Dunphy had twelve hours' start of them on the Erie road.

On the evening of the 28th they rolled out of the

dust and din of Kansas City, across the turbid Missouri, and on to the green plains of Kansas, by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé Railway; and again Mr. Dunphy had just twelve hours' start of them, upon the same route.

CHAPTER XIV.

"YOUTH AT THE PROW."

FIFTEEN days had passed since Mr. Audran left Interlaken. The Dysarts and Waldeyers still remained there, making the usual excursions to the Grindelwald, the Wengern Alp, and the Lauterbrunnen valley, including Mürren. In fact, Helen, to whom all decisions were referred, loyally carried out, so far as she could, the plan which Robert had sketched for her. The whole party joined in these excursions, the baroness and Mrs. Dysart going wherever carriages or chairs could take them. The baron made a capital guide. Alice declared that he was as useful as Mr. Audran and almost as intelligent, but he had not Mr. Audran's faculty of communicating his own enthusiasm.

The baroness had made an entire conquest of Mrs. Dysart and Eugene, by the sense and spirit of her conversation, her fund of anecdote, and her readiness to please and oblige. Upon Helen she had made no experiments; there had never been any renewal of the excitement which attended their early interviews. Wherever Helen led conversation, she followed it. Whenever Helen spoke of her friends at home, she showed great interest in learning all about them. She

was glad if Helen allowed her to adjust her dress, very happy when she saw that Helen remembered or deferred to her tastes and opinions, wished to hear her sing, and followed all her motions with a watchful pride and pleasure so constant that Mrs. Dysart and Alice were often amused by it.

At the end of ten days it became evident that they had exhausted the attractions of Interlaken, and that it was time to seek something new. One day Madame Waldeyer found Alice by herself, and began a conversation.

"You will be leaving Interlaken soon, will you not? Whither will you go?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Alice. "I don't think Mrs. Dysart has any very settled plan. What would you advise?"

"If I knew what you most wished to see, I might suggest where you would be most likely to find it," replied the baroness. "It would make very little difference to me where you go, if I might go with you."

"Have you, then, no plans of your own?" said Alice.

"No, dear," replied the baroness. "The thing which I most desire now is to be near my daughter, — to be happy, as I am now, in her presence, and, if possible, to do something which will add to her pleasure. Alice, I know you love Helen?"

"Of course I do. Everybody loves Helen."

The baroness looked tenderly and sadly upon her as she continued, "And yet you have home and parents

and brothers and sisters and friends and youth, and all the hope and promise of life before you. Whatever is opening for you has closed or is closing for me. I cannot bear to be alone at Hohentauben, where everything reminds me of him who was all the world to me! O dear child, I hope you may some time belong to one who will not only fill your life with endless love and trust, but will lift your mind to everything that is fresh and true and fair. Why was I formed and trained to love so deeply, if I may not always have something to love? How can I go away from Helen, who is so dear to me, and whose love I so much long to win?"

"I don't know, Madame Waldeyer. I am sure I don't know how you can go; but, for that matter, neither do I see how you can stay. Everybody must think a great deal better of you, and no one can reproach you, for loving Helen as you do. You are so simple and direct yourself, dear madame, that you will not be offended at what I may say?"

"No, indeed. Speak freely as you will. I wind myself up so in my own desires and imaginings that I ought to know, and I want to know, how they seem to others."

Alice hesitated one moment, and then began bravely: "I am not sure that I am right, and I am afraid you will think I am saying cruel things, but it seems to me that you have lost your opportunity. Only the infancy and youth of children belong to their parents. When they are matured, like Helen, they have their own lives to live, their own homes to make; and they do not go

back and develop new affections for new-found parents, unless they are bound to them by inevitable association. I cannot bear to say what is so painful to you, but we must all face the facts of life; and I do not see why you are not to look on Helen as other mothers of your age look on their full-grown daughters, and more so, even, for your claim can never be as good as theirs."

"You are right, dear. In your own brave, true words, I have lost my opportunity. All her tender, dependent infancy; all her sweet, budding childhood; all her girlish beauty, with its yearnings for counsel and sympathy, — I *have* lost. A mother's life of devotion is her true claim to the love of a right-minded child. Helen does not owe me that, — she never did, she never will. If she is indignant that I forsook her in her cradle, when no dumb creature even forsakes her young, I cannot answer her. I may not claim from her a daughter's love, for I have not been a mother to her; and she must prefer Mrs. Dysart, who has been to her all that I have not been. It seems too much to ask her to believe that for nearly thirty years, — unseen, unknown, and silent, — all this time a mother's heart has been in me, more intense because denied expression, nothing lost, — complete, compact, now passionately anxious to atone for past default. An injured woman, abandoned at the time of her greatest need, and suffering an eclipse of reason, sinned against her own child, under circumstances in which repentance, however deep, however constant, must be unavailing. Must it be forever unavailing? I did not give her care, but I did give her

life, — bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh; and I want to give her whatever good of life remains in me. The threads of my being are woven all through the web of hers; the type of her nature is in mine, from which it sprung. She shrinks and dilates, she suffers and aspires, as I do. My picture at thirty would pass for her picture now; and wherever she is unlike me, she is like what I most admire."

Alice looked up; and four tender, tearful eyes told their story to each other.

"Well, then, dear Madame Waldeyer, what would you like to have us do?"

The baroness's tone changed at once. Crisp and gay, she answered, "I should like to be allowed to go wherever you go; and then, when you are tired of wandering, that you — all of you — should come to me at Hohentauben, and be my guests for so long as you could be content to stay. Now, you dear, persuasive, winning creature, won't you make this all plain to Mrs. Dysart and to Helen? And by and by I will speak for myself."

"Who is persuasive now, I wonder?" said Alice, as she curved her graceful neck to kiss the baroness's cheek. "What do you call your home, madame?"

"I called it just now Hohentauben. Like most places in Alsace, however, it has both a French and a German name. The French name is L'Epine, — I fear because the old Waldeyers were thorns in the way of peaceful travellers through the valley of the Fecht. It stands on a wooded and rocky slope, looking southward over a reach of the river, which just there

widens out like a lake. At the foot of the slope another small stream comes through thick woods, and falls into the Fecht. It is called the Vogelbach, — Bird-Brook, — because there used to be a great many wild pigeons there. They came out of that shady valley, and sailed about the lofty castle-tower; and so the country people called it Hohentauben, or High-Doves. You shall all have saddle-horses when you get there, and for every pleasant day a new excursion, — to Kaiserberg, to Hohenlandberg, to the Drei Exen; and the baron shall tell you the story of each for a thousand years, — their courts, their festivals, and their sieges. We are about four miles from Colmar; and just across the Rhine is the Black Forest, which is as full of strange and fascinating nooks as any place in the world. Don't you want to see all this, Alice?"

"Indeed I do," said she. "Not everybody has the chance; not everybody can have you as hostess and guide."

"Nobody ever has had," replied the baroness. "The baron was peculiar. The most charming of men when in society, he never sought it; nor, until his later years, did he ever invite any one to our house. He was too fond of nature and study to be willing to give up his time to strangers. Had it not been for our journeys twice a year, I should have seen nobody. But come and see his home, and how lovely he made it, and you will hardly wonder."

"Believe me, madame," said Alice, "if the decision rests with me, we shall come."

A council was held in Mrs. Dysart's room that evening, the result of which was favorable to the wishes of the baroness. All felt that a longer time in which to study her character was desirable. So, when she next mentioned her invitation, Mrs. Dysart said gently, —

"We will stay a fortnight longer in the mountains, if you are content to remain with us; and then, if you still wish it, we will return with you to Hohentauben. Helen has a fancy to go over the Gemmi Pass into the valley of the Rhone, and so to Martigny. I don't know where she got the notion, but it seems a pleasant one; and, if you agree, we will all go."

They went, accordingly, next evening to Spiez, in order to make an early start on the following day for the twenty miles' journey to Kandersteg. One carriage was occupied by Mrs. Dysart and the baroness; the baron, as in duty bound, attended them. Helen, Alice, and Walter occupied the other, and Eugene vibrated between the two. The baron took such care to point out every feature of interest that when they arrived at the upper end of the green and constantly narrowing valley of the Kander, and at four o'clock descended at the little inn of the Bär, they declared that the day had been only too short and not at all fatiguing.

After dinner they strolled out in front of the solitary hotel. The sun was already hidden behind the overshadowing mountain wall, and the chill of evening drove them to the fire in the conversation-room. For the first time since she came abroad, Mrs. Dysart had passed out of the region of large towns and populous hotels;

and the transition to this wild, rock-bound valley, and the lonely little hostel, of which they were the only guests, contrasted strongly with the life and bustle which they had just quitted. When the night-wind, in fitful gusts, came rushing through the chasm where the Oeschinen plunges over the rocks, the house trembled with the jar of the cataract, and the glass in the windows rattled. Then the wind would die away, whispering and sobbing through the tree-tops of the gloomy pine-forest, to return again by and by in a gust which roared down the chimney and scattered the ashes and sparks about the hearth. Mrs. Dysart could not tell why, after a day so bright, a sense of helplessness and depression should suddenly take possession of her. Her heart, which had been affected by the rheumatism of the previous year, throbbed uneasily. She knew the doctors had at the time been anxious about it, though afterwards they had reassured her and themselves. Could it be that it was going to trouble her again? She was comforted when Madame Waldeyer suggested that it might be the elevated air which disturbed the regularity of the circulation; still she did not entirely accept the explanation. It would be so dreadful if anything should happen to her there, in that lonely place, she reflected. Taking Helen with her, she went early to her room, and for the first time in months she said, "Oh, I wish I were safely at home in our own peaceful house on the Hudson!" Well for her that she was not, for even then her husband was struggling for breath in the grasp of the burglar.

The birds were singing a full-throated carol to the bright morning sun when she woke again, and all nature was so brilliant and so dewy fresh, so vocal and inspired, that Mrs. Dysart felt ashamed of the terrors of the night, and quite ready to start upon the day's route to Leuker-Bad, eighteen miles away.

At the Bär the carriage-road ends, and it is necessary to find other modes of travel. It was arranged that Mrs. Dysart should be carried over the whole route in a chair slung between two poles and so balanced as to give her always a level seat. Four stout men were to relieve each other in pairs at this work. The rest of the party went on horseback, except the boys, who started ahead on foot, to gain time for an occasional rest. Through the fragrant forest, by the rushing glacier stream, over bare and sunny ledges, past the châlet of Schwarenbach, along the cold Daubensee, they fared on their slow but pleasant way, and a little after noon joined the young men on a knoll a quarter of a mile to the left of the road at the summit.

Behind them lay the path by which they had come, sliding down into the dim northern forest, and flanked by the Rinderhorn, the Balmhorn, and the great snowy mass of the Altels. Westward the blue Lämmeren Glacier crept down from the side of Wildstrubel, crowned by a peak of glittering ice, and fronted by the solemn crag of the Daubenhorn. Before them a mighty precipice dropped down into the green abyss, where, three thousand feet below, and, as it seemed, hardly a pistol-shot from its base, nestled the hamlet of Leuker-Bad, in the

lovely valley of the Dala. Still farther, and another three thousand feet lower down, lay the deep, narrow valley of the Rhone, beyond which, ridge and crag and cone of dark-red rock in Titanic roughness, climbed to the mighty chain of the Valaisian Alps, — Monte Rosa gleaming fair in the far east, then the clustering spires of the Mischabelhörner, the massive dome of the Weisshorn, the slender pinnacle of the Matterhorn, and low in the west the jagged ridge of the Dent Blanche.

They stood now face to face with that rank of giants whose procession they had seen in profile, a fortnight before, from the top of the Furca. Less dazzling in beauty than the snowy frontage at Mürren, and less comprehensive in its range than that of the Rigi, they yet thought it by far the grandest panorama they had seen in Switzerland; and Helen said to herself, "Mr. Audran knew what he was talking about." At this point they dismounted, and the forethought of the baron appeared in a provision of alpenstocks, to steady their footsteps as they went plunging down the short, sharp zigzags hewn on the face of the precipice.

The baron walked directly behind Mrs. Dysart's chair, to reassure her by his presence. More than once he might have dropped a stone plumb three hundred feet down upon the heads of those in front.

By three o'clock they were all housed again in the Hôtel des Alpes. Mrs. Dysart had borne the journey without fatigue, and remarked that it could not have been the elevation which disturbed the action of her heart the night before, because she had now passed over a summit six thousand feet higher.

In the morning they were ushered along a stone-paved corridor of the hotel into the bathing-hall, — a large rectangular room, lighted from above. The floor, except a narrow margin along the sides which afforded room for a bench against the wall, was broken by two great square tanks, divided from each other by a bar. These tanks were lined with tiles of white faience, and in them sat a dozen or more bathers, the women in one and the men in the other, each robed in a long white flannel gown and parti-colored skull-cap. For support, they generally rested their backs against the wall of the tank; and before each floated a tray, bearing coffee, wine, cordial, or a book with a knife for turning the leaves, while all around them the hot water flowed silently in and out. Occasionally a sociable bather would flop and paddle, like a human saurian, to exchange notes with his acquaintance. The spectacle was so comical to the visitors that they could hardly understand the intense and serious decorum which prevailed among the bathers. Mrs. Dysart heard such stories of the virtue of the waters in cases of rheumatism that she decided to give them three days' trial, during which the younger people made several pleasant excursions. On the fourth day they drove down the lovely valley of the Dala to the railroad, which carried them quickly past the Roman towns, the episcopal palaces, and the feudal castles of Sion and Sierre, and so to Martigny.

Martigny is the point of departure for the Great St. Bernard and the Valley of Chamouny; and the question arose whether the party should all go together over the mountains into this valley.

The baron assured Mrs. Dysart that the entire journey to Chamouny might easily be made in a carriage, except four or five miles over the Tête Noire, where a chair would be necessary. Madame Waldeyer's opinion was then asked.

She hesitated, but at length said, "I have twice made this trip; there is nothing in it to disturb a person in good health, except the risks of the weather. If Mr. Dysart were here to accompany you, I think you could go and enjoy it. But I cannot conceal from you that the other evening at Kandersteg I felt as though I perhaps had done wrong in not dissuading you from so adventurous a journey. If it was my duty then, it is all the more so now, and yet I dislike to do it. If you should decide against it, since the young people should by all means have the pleasure, may I attend you to Geneva? It is but an hour by rail to the lake, and three hours in a comfortable boat to the city. There you can rest for the night in an excellent hotel, and next day we will take a private carriage fifteen miles to Sallenches, and the day after fifteen miles more into Chamouny, where your party will rejoin you. I am so familiar with the route that I do not hesitate in the least to conduct you alone, leaving the baron to attend Helen and Miss Carroll across the mountains."

"That would certainly be a great pleasure for me," said the baron; "but, as my escort is by no means necessary for them, I cannot allow you and Madame Dysart to make a three days' journey unattended. So I must resign my privilege to Mr. Audran and Eugene."

Mrs. Dysart protested against this, but the baron was inflexible.

The whole party went together next day to Vernayaz to see the Gorge du Trient and the magnificent fall of the Sallenche, and thence the baron, baroness, and Mrs. Dysart went on by rail to the lake, while the others returned to Martigny for the next morning's start. The baron had advised them to go by the Col de Balme rather than by the Tête Noire, which, if the day were clear, would give them a view of the entire chain of the Bernese mountains, and, on the other hand, the still more striking range of Mont Blanc.

The young men were now become so familiar with mountain climbing that they disdained horses, and only the ladies rode. A single guide attended them. Through the meadows of the Dranse, and the chestnut-groves and vineyards which reach far up its banks, they passed until they came to the hamlet of Fontaine.

"Fontaine?" said Helen. "Is not that the name of your brother's estate?"

"Yes," replied Walter, "and this is the 29th. He expected to leave New York on the 24th, so he is probably there now, buried in shadows of the night. A third of the round world's surface is between us and him, and yet he sleeps by one fountain while we ride through another. Man seems but a little thing here, among these great mountains and cataracts of ice, yet how he sweeps over the world, and uses it as though it were made for him!"

"And is it not?" said Helen.

"I don't know," answered he. "If it is, it waited a long time for his coming, and will probably survive his departure equally long."

"Then you don't believe in the eternity of the race?" said she.

"There certainly was a time," he answered, "when it did not exist; therefore it is not eternal."

"Of course I meant eternal in the sense of its lasting as long as the world itself."

"There the analogies of nature are against you. That is not the record of the rocks or of the stars or of the seas. These mountains on which we stand are built of insect skeletons; they are the tombstones of ages and of races, — oh, how many! Destruction and reconstruction in endless succession have followed each other since this planet was a mist of whirling vapor, and life from its source has overflowed the world from unremembered ages. Goethe says, —

> 'The world's unwithered countenance
> Is bright as at creation's day.'

It is brighter, as from the records of the past the infinite scope of the future is foreshadowed, the earth moving forward through cycles of adaptation, and life advancing through like cycles of development from the monad to the man; and if in this procession of the ages the earth should become fitted for something better than man, would not something better be?"

"Is not man better than any aspect of nature?" asked Helen.

"Perhaps," said Walter; "but nature is not complete. The word itself is a future participle, — *natura*, that which is about to be born."

"For what, then, was the world made, if not for man?" asked Helen. Alice had told her that Walter was a speculative youth, but as yet she had hardly seen this herself, and she was becoming interested.

"I must say again that I don't know," said Walter. "The Maker made it; he wished it even so, perhaps, for the theatre upon which his own infinite life might unfold itself in an infinite series of living thoughts and forms. Would it be for his glory to suppose that any one of his creatures is the final effort of his Maker, — is anything more than a transitional form?"

"Go on," said Helen. "Let me know what your thoughts are like."

"Well, then, suppose that this world is the home of the Divine Spirit, to whom an atom is not small, and a system is not great, — infinite in activity as in knowledge and power, working forever through periods of which recorded time is but as one leaf of the volume, — what is the product? A stream of thoughts and forms, a tide of types and organisms, instincts, affections, affinities, forces, laws, sequences, — an incomprehensible aggregate of life. Does it not seem a violent assumption that all this was made for this latest and most conceited creature, man? I should say the world was made for *all* the life which it has borne and shall bear, of which man just now is the crest and crown, — the breaking bubble on the rolling surge of Being.

"It does not matter whether we look through the infinite spaces of the universe or whether we look through the fathomless history of the world itself, I fancy man's place in cosmos is not a thing to be beyond measure glorified."

"Why!" said Helen, "you, one of the lords of creation, undervaluing your title at that rate! Seriously, now, Walter, what does the Bible say? The first chapter of Genesis tells us, 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, created he him,' to 'have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth.' That was in the beginning; and, thousands of years after, David sings, 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou hast put all things under his feet.' Then, if more were needed, in the fulness of time, 'for us men, and for our salvation, he sent his Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh.' Wherever, in any age or in any faith, the form of God is pictured in word or work, it is always in the type of the human form. What says Hamlet? 'In action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!' Why, Walter, will you deny your birthright, and thus insist upon a comparison with the lower forms of life? There are difficulties in your material philosophy, no less than in faith. Why not, since at last it must come to an election between them, elect to trust the larger hope, — the only hope which rescues us from annihilation, and 'brings immortality to light'? I did not mean to preach to you, my boy; but I am disturbed by your philosophy."

"And I did not mean to scoff to you, Miss Dysart. But is there anything irreverent in holding that all forms of being are alike issues of the Divine Nature, whose thought gives them form, and whose life flows over into them as each may contain it? If Jehovah is the I Am, is Existence, is not Existence Jehovah? And if all this inconceivable mass of life, from the lowest form to the highest, from the beginning until now, is the effluence of God's life, is it not arithmetic which tells us that man is but a little fraction of the whole? You have quoted Scripture to me. Do you recall that it is anywhere said that God repented him of any other work of his hands except man? And is not this anthropomorphic instinct, which figures the Highest and the Whole by a human likeness, and goes out to measure the universe by units of its own stature, — is it not this which has been the essence of all superstition, hoodwinking the reason, degrading the religious nature? I will not talk about my creed. It may not be to-morrow what it is to-day; but, at any rate, it is not atheism or polytheism."

"It is pantheism, dear Walter, — it is the temptation of young and sensitive minds; and we are, both of us, clear beyond our depth."

CHAPTER XV.

DISTRACTION.

ALONG the slope of the Col de Forclaz, through the lonely hamlet of Trient, a short climb up and across its narrow valley, and they came to the forest-clothed shoulder of the mountain. Backward and forward, up the steep zigzags, they toiled for two miles; and as the dwindling forest gave place to heath-covered rocks, they became aware that their sky also had changed. Gray masses of cloud, with here and there a drooping fringe, were scudding rapidly from the south, and large flakes of moist snow began to fall. Thicker and faster they came, until the ground was entirely covered, and the path could hardly be discovered. The guide bade them follow him closely; for the snow fell so fast that his footprints were quickly filled. Whoever should stray from the path would lose sight of it and his comrades at once. It was already four o'clock, and the Col was still far away. The rude wind swept the snow in their faces, and made their wraps heavy and uncomfortable. The horses staggered and stumbled, and the guide began to look grave.

"How much farther is it to the top?" asked Walter, after a while.

"I cannot see any landmarks," said the guide; "but it must be still a mile. We shall be late at Argentière, if indeed we get there at all."

"Is there any doubt about our getting there?" asked Walter hastily.

"I hope not," said the guide. "No one can tell what we may find beyond the summit."

"Do you think, then, that perhaps we shall be forced to turn back?"

"Possibly, but not yet. There will still be time to return to Trient half an hour later; and before that time the storm may pass over. But you are getting very wet, monsieur."

"Oh, do let us push on! It is no worse to move than to stand."

So forward they stumbled for half an hour more, when the guide said cheerily, "We are near the Col. This brook, crossing the path, is just below the last pitch."

At that moment a gust of wind tore a lane through the driving scud, and revealed on the ridge above them a solitary building, used sometimes as an inn, but now abandoned for the season. A few moments of redoubled effort placed them, wet and breathless, under the lee of its protecting wall. This was the summit, from which the grand view promised by the baron was to have been seen; but before, behind, to right and left, only whirling banks of snow and fog were visible.

The house was closed and fastened, and Walter said,

"It will never do to stand here, cold and wet, in this gale of wind."

The guide demurred. The horses, he said, were exhausted; they must rest for half an hour in the shed; it was impossible for them to move yet.

"How far is it to Argentière?" asked Helen.

"About four miles," answered the guide.

"Is the path plain?"

"Yes, for the first mile; after that it is very confused, because of the many cattle-tracks which cross it, and the beds of dry streams."

"Miss Dysart," said Walter, "you will both get your deaths of cold if you stand here, and you could not be any wetter than you are. Had we not better walk on, and let the guide follow?"

"Yes, I think so, Walter. 'T is a blind venture, but we 'll try it."

The guide led them to the brow of the ridge, and pointed out the path. The ladies double-reefed their skirts and retied their hats. Fortunately, what had been snow on the crest and on the north side of the mountain had on the south been partly rain, and the path was not so heavily covered. Over the sodden and spongy ground, into and over the rivulets which streamed from the springy hillside, careless any longer of wet or dirt, the party plunged down the path. They had gone a mile in this way, when Helen cried, "Surely it is getting lighter, Walter."

Below, toward the valley, everything was still dark and impenetrable; but overhead the mist was thinner, whiter,

and filled with a diffused sunlight. Just then came a gust of lifting wind, and as they stood with upturned faces, in one instant the veil rolled away; and right above their heads, like shafts of golden fire streaming up into the infinite blue heaven, rose the Aiguille Verte and the Aiguille-d'-Or.

Overpowered by a glory so sudden and supreme, they sank upon a rock by the wayside. Ever after in memory Helen compared that vision to the opening heavens and the golden pinnacles of the Celestial City in the Revelation. The serenity of the upper sky spread downward to the lower air; and in the light of glittering rain-drops on beds of Alpine roses, and to the music of the cow-bells of the returning herds, they went gayly down to Argentière. The walk had warmed them, and no mischief followed the exposure.

The next day was spent in excursions, and evening brought them to Chamouny, where they found Mrs. Dysart, the baroness, and the baron already arrived.

Mrs. Dysart could not speak warmly enough of the care and consideration shown her by her companions, or of the charm which their perfect knowledge of localities had given to the journey. "I was never conscious of my wants," she said, "until I found them all provided for."

Helen hastened to the baroness's room, who received her with eager and tremulous fondness.

"Darling," she said, "you don't know how I have missed you! For three whole days I have wanted your presence, your voice, yourself, — so full of every good thing for me. Do sit down, and let me look at you."

"And let me," said Helen, as she sat down, "let me thank you for your great kindness to my other mother. After you were gone, I realized how strange it was that I should have been willing to allow you to take my place and do my work for me. It shows how much I believe in your goodness; and I am as much obliged to you as Mrs. Dysart is. She has just been telling me how very pleasant you made everything for her."

"Then I must tell you," said the baroness, "how very pleasant it was to do so, and how entertaining and delightful she was in every way. She seemed perfectly well; don't you think she looks so?"

"Yes; she has improved very much since we left Paris; and I think the summer in Switzerland will restore her to perfect health."

"Did you enjoy your trip across the mountains?"

"Very much," replied Helen. There was one hour, coming down from the Col de Balme, which was worth a month of ordinary life."

"That young Mr. Audran is very good company, is he not?"

"Yes, he is a nice fellow, — modest, manly, and considerate, as well as amusing. He took very good care of us."

"Does he soon go to Heidelberg?"

"He has not spoken of his plans. The term begins in October, I think. He will not need to go very soon."

"And what does he say of his brother?"

"Nothing. He has heard nothing from him. In

fact, it is hardly time to expect a letter, written from New York."

"You know, dearest, I am waiting in hope you will all promise me a visit at Hohentauben; and in that case Mr. Audran must come with you. I shall make him understand how glad we shall be to welcome him there."

"If we go, I hope he will. Mamma likes to have Eugene with him. It is beautiful to see how quick and far-reaching his thoughts are."

"Yes," said the baroness, "there is nothing so beautiful as youth, — unworn, unsoiled, full of high thoughts, ruled by conscience, and constantly growing in power."

Helen went over and threw her arms about her mother's neck and kissed her, as she replied, "I think there is one thing more rare and lovely still, and that is an age which redeems the errors of a misguided youth, and makes its troubled waters clear and sweet. It is you, dear mother."

The tears dropped from the baroness's downcast eyes as she leaned her head against Helen's breast and murmured, "It is *so* sweet to hear that from you! But that is no reason why I should spoil your dress, darling," — raising her head, — "when I would rather adorn it. I strayed along the Tour de l'Isle night before last, to find some little gift for my daughter, and here it is."

She took from the table a case containing a brooch. It was a disk about the size of a half-dollar, and seemed made all of precious stones, an outer circle of pure liquid aquamarines enclosing an inner circle of fine

opals, whose clouded fire gathered round one large and perfect pearl set high above and within them.

"Oh, lovely!" said Helen. "You know just what pleases me, and so does the man who made that."

The baroness blushed as she said, "The baron selected that pearl and ordered it set in the middle of the circlet. He thinks you are a pearl of price, Helen."

It was Helen's turn to blush now, as she answered, "He is very kind, and his taste in jewels is certainly perfect."

"How pleased he will be to have you think so!" said Madame Waldeyer, "and I am pleased too; but, Helen, it is no part of my plan to commend him to you, and I am a traitor for telling you of his share in the brooch."

"Very amiable treachery, I am sure," said Helen. "But, mother, about our going to Hohentauben. I don't think my father would object or regret, — but — "

"You mean, dear, will the world respect the wife and daughter if they accept hospitality from the woman who abandoned the father and deserted the child. Perhaps the world might not; but, Helen, the world is not your arbiter. You do not measure or desire to measure your steps to its music. There is a world beyond and above what we call the world, — a world of men and women whose better and gentler wisdom you admire, whose loftier example you revere. 'Blessed are the merciful!' Would Jesus and Mary and Augustine and Beatrice and Fenélon and Madame Guyon wonder at or reprove an act which looked above the level of the hour? You do not care for a world which has no con-

sistency with itself. If you were poor and insignificant, it might blame you. Being what you are, it will be quick to find good reasons for what you do. So much for your world; as for mine, I have none. There is no one before whom I need to vindicate a position which has never been questioned; no one to whom I wish to display you. At my house you will see nobody except my servants. I am as weak and as human as the rest of my kind, no doubt, but my weakness does not lie in that direction. I do not ask your mother and yourself to come to me that I may mend my reputation by aid of your charity. I feel deeply that only there where I have lived can you fairly judge whether (if in the circumstances of the case you have found any apology for my act toward your father) the course of my life since has been such as would make me unfit for your love and society. You cannot be deceived; you will not be beguiled. My motives are before you, and you must judge them.

"You said just now that I knew how to please you, Helen, dearest; and why not? You are part of me; your being is of mine; your pure mind and heart are my conscience. I *must* have absolution of it, — there is none other worth my asking. But don't imagine that I want to control your life. Far from it. I want you to control mine. I have always been controlled. Alexandre just absorbed me in himself, and life for me was always best and fullest when it flowed freely in the current of his life. I know well enough that we cannot or may not always live together. Parents who have

better claim than I do not expect or wish to have their children always with them. Alice told me truly, if severely, that I had lost my opportunity for that. What nature appoints I can or I must accept. I will submit to be parted from my daughter when some one comes to claim her, when she is drawn away by another and more compelling love. What I cannot submit to is that my thoughts may not follow her; that they may not rise like hers to compass all the events of her life; that hers shall not come back to penetrate my own. Go, Helen, to any career which you propose; but let my time, purse, talent if I have any, go with you and help you on your way; and when you claim the congratulation of your friends for your success, believe that mine will come from the broadest, nearest, proudest interest which any human heart can feel for you; or if, perchance, disappointment, weariness, sorrow, or repulse should come to you, let me be with you in the cloud and in the fire."

"You are so intense, mother; when you begin to talk in this way, you overpower me."

"I know that I am, dear; but, don't you understand, if all were fixed and accepted with us, it would not be so? When I begin to think of losing you, or of never gaining you, it makes me so fierce and unhappy that I become wordy and tiresome. I hear the baron's step. Shall I bid him come in?"

"Pray do," said Helen. "I was hoping to see him too."

"Ah! you here, Miss Dysart? This is an unexpected pleasure."

"Yes; I came to thank both you and Madame Waldeyer for your care of Mrs. Dysart. It was a kindness that we could not have asked, that you should give up the pleasure of the trip across the mountains to do escort duty for an invalid, and make the journey so charming to her, though it was not new to yourselves. When we were caught in that driving storm, and had to stumble on in the dark and on foot, I felt how wise as well as kind you had been in dissuading my mother from the attempt."

"My dear Miss Dysart, your mother would not have been caught in any such storm. I should not have advised her to go by the Col de Balme. We should have all crossed together by the Tête Noire. There was no storm here in Chamouny; so, probably, there was very little there, and you would have had carriage all the way. But we enjoyed the journey as much as Mrs. Dysart. Every time I cross the Lake of Geneva, it seems to me more beautiful than ever before."

"Is it so beautiful, then?" said Helen.

"Exquisitely so, and rich in history and associations as well, so many famous names of places and persons are identified with its shores. Chillon, Montreux, Clarens, Vevay, Lausanne, Fernex, Coppet, Geneva, — Byron, Ludlow, Gibbon, Voltaire, Madame de Stäel, Rousseau, Calvin, — what names are these! And is there in the world a drive more beautiful than that through the valley of the Arve, between Geneva and Chamouny? Mrs. Dysart said that she believed the drop-curtains of all the theatres in the world had been suggested by that

scenery; and the Lake of Como. I hope you had some pleasure, in spite of the storm."

Then Helen told the story of their journey, until it was time to separate.

The party spent a week at Chamouny, in the usual excursions, and then returned to Geneva, where they found this letter from Julia to Helen awaiting them: —

GLENWOOD, July 23.

DEAR HELEN, — Father and Mr. Audran have just gone to the nine o'clock train, and the house and all in it are quiet as the grave, — except myself, and I am so excited that I feel as though I should never be quiet again. To go back to the beginning, your last, — from Lucerne, of the 28th of June, — written just as you were starting on an excursion with the Audrans, was received on the 15th of July. I don't know why it was so long on the way. We knew nothing more of you until yesterday morning, when father sent up the letters which Mr. Audran brought, with the message that Mr. Audran himself would come up with him in the evening. You can imagine what an afternoon I had of it, all by myself. I was wrought up to such a pitch that I could hardly wait until supper was over before attacking Mr. Audran; and then, to my surprise and disgust, I found that he, like the rest of you, was determined to think and speak well of the baroness and her claim. I suppose it must be all right, if you agree together to consider it so; but it seems a strange thing to me to find myself at odds with all my family because I can't approve of a woman who

left my father to elope with a Frenchman, and abandoned his daughter at six weeks of age to the tender mercies of strangers, and who now returns, nearly thirty years after, to plunder the family which she has outraged.

I can't trust myself to write to you at present, lest I should indulge in some such tirade as that which made father send me to bed last night, and, I dare say, left Mr. Audran with the impression that I was a she-dragon or a termagant or anything else that is awful.

Well, either I am very queer, or you all are; and upon my word, I am in doubt which it is. And, I must say, neither do I like your Mr. Audran altogether. He is very reserved, and not at all disposed to be frank with regard to himself and you. I know, as well as though he had said so, that before coming away he asked you to marry him. If you said Yes, it would be no more than natural that he should rave about you, but he did n't; and if you said No, I may venture to add that he seemed in a very complacent frame of mind for a rejected lover. The only solution of the enigma is, that you said both Yes and No; and that is what puzzles me most, — that you, who have such lofty notions about plain-dealing with lovers, should do it. It is a great piece of assurance in him, I think, to imagine you could be willing to leave New York, and follow him out to Colorado, where he gives his energies to multiplying calves and lambs. Father takes to him wonderfully; and I suppose I ought to forgive everything to a man who has saved your life, and captivated your fancy at a week's notice. Still, I am

very much mistaken if, after the glamour of that escapade in the mountains wears off, you do not feel that you have made a mistake, and regret that you were not more decided in your answer.

Mr. Audran said, when I was asking him about the baroness, that he fancied she would like to marry you to the baron, brother of her — other baron. Well, if there is to be any marrying at all, I can imagine that a distinguished soldier, with a title and a castle and a good estate and a seat in the French parliament, might please my difficult sister — who is not without her ambitions — better than a cow-driver from Heaven knows where. We could come out and visit you sometimes, perhaps, if my lord deigned to speak us fair. O Helen, this is really dreadful of me, I know, and I ought to wait until I have seen Mr. Audran again. I admit that he is handsome, if that is any amends. He is coming up with father again to-night, but as the steamer day is to-morrow I can't leave my letter open for second impressions.

Well, I have blown off my spleen, and will write by Saturday's steamer, and perhaps take it all back; at any rate, I won't scold you any more. Even if you care for this provokingly reserved gentleman, you will forgive your sister — who in any event is your *half*-sister; you can't get rid of that — for being a little impatient over so much worriment and mystery. Oh, how I should like to know just how you all feel about it *now!* I shall write next to mother. Love to her, to Eugene, and to Alice.

Your affectionate JULIA.

Helen read her letter eagerly, and, though vexed, could not help laughing over it. She handed it to Mrs. Dysart with the comment, "That is Julia all through"; and Mrs. Dysart, having read it, added, "Yes, that is Julia. She does not check her feelings or measure her words. It is evident that your father has not spoken to her as he did to us about the baroness. She does not understand that the one bad act of her life was done when she was out of her mind and not responsible, and that in everything else she is so much better and more interesting than most women. Helen, has Madame Waldeyer ever intimated any such plan as this which Julia speaks of? I don't quite like Mr. Audran's suggesting it to her."

"No, mother, never. She has hinted that the baron thinks highly of me; that is all."

"I can very well understand Julia's perplexity about your relations to Mr. Audran," went on Mrs. Dysart, "for I am perplexed myself. You have not been frank with me on that subject, Helen."

"Do you think that I ought to repeat anything that Mr. Audran may have said to me alone, in confidence?"

"I think that a man who offers himself to a lady should expect that her friends would be informed of the fact."

"Well, then, mamma, Mr. Audran told me that his circumstances did not allow him to marry at present, and that our acquaintance had not been long enough to warrant him in making such a suggestion to me."

"I call that a remarkably uncivil communication. Declines with thanks! I don't wonder he went off without speaking to anybody the next morning, and has not written to anybody since. I hope you defined your position as clearly as he seems to have defined his."

"Now don't misunderstand me, please, mother. What Mr. Audran meant to say, and what he did say, was that his position at present was not such as he would dare offer me, and that he would not venture to ask my opinion of himself on such short acquaintance. That was his purpose when he came to the interview, — I know, for he told me so, — and I respect him for it. Later — perhaps because I took no pains to conceal the fact that I am interested in him, perhaps because I may in some way have made him think that it was my wish that he should do so — he did offer himself to me, and I told him that I certainly would not accept any offer which it had not been his deliberate intention to make. So he went away with every right to suppose that he might come again whenever he pleased. There, mother, that is the plain history. I did not think it a thing to be published, but I don't like to be reproached for concealment. Of course it is not publishing it to tell it to you, but I should not wish to have Mr. Audran's name bandied about with mine."

"Well, Helen, it is a matter of taste and opinion, but I should have thought better of him for not backing and filling in that way, and I have a prejudice in favor of a man who does not go beyond the limits of ordinary

pleasant social intercourse until he is prepared to follow up one step with another."

"It is very evident, mother, that we think differently about Mr. Audran, and yet your words disturb me. You know I am not in the habit of seeking more than what you call ordinary pleasant social intercourse with anybody. You have been impatient with me sometimes because you thought me, as you said, 'inaccessible and fastidious,' and wondered that I was not more eager for some other home than my father's house. You have made me very happy there, and I thank you and love you for it; but now, when the discovery comes that I have only half a right there, — that perhaps my presence threatens the peace, the position, and the resources of the family, — that it would be relief from a burden if I found an independent home for myself, — when I am troubled and in doubt, comes this gentleman, with the culture of a scholar and the record of a gallant and trustworthy man, pleasing me more, suiting me better, than any other man ever did, but hesitating to ask anything of me, as I fully believe, out of his great modesty and respect. He sees me looking anywhere, everywhere, for some way out of my great perplexity, and in his tender care for me he says, Will you take the little help I can give? It stings me sorely that you should speak so scornfully of his embarrassment and mine. I have no right to doubt your motive, and I do not; but I think, knowing me as you do, you should believe that I am trying to choose the path which shall be best for all who love and care for me, and am willing to accept

almost any sacrifice for myself, rather than your comfort or your happiness should be endangered."

Never before had Mrs. Dysart seen Helen so much roused. Her cheek was flushed, her eyes glittered, form and feature were instinct with the purpose to keep her own destiny and her own dignity in her own hands; and Mrs. Dysart did not dare to put another fraction of pressure upon her.

"Dear Helen, be calm!" she said. "We trust you entirely, all of us. Do what is right in your own eyes, and we will all stand or fall with you. I am not going to say one word more about Mr. Audran. Happily you are under no pledge to him. But listen: I have had a much better chance to study Baron Waldeyer than ever I had to study Mr. Audran, and I cannot see that in any respect he is less worthy or less interesting. No one could be more courteous or more helpful than he has been ever since we met. And who is he? A senator of France, a commander of the Legion of Honor, heir of an honored name and a fine estate. He and all he is and has are coming straight to your feet. It will be in your power to distinguish yourself and your family by a splendid alliance, and to convert this perplexity, which is so threatening for all of us, into *éclat*, fortune, distinction for us all. I am sure that this is so, and that over this loyal, tender, and heroic man you can have all the influence which any woman ever had over any man. Madame Waldeyer has told us what a husband his brother was, and I am sure that the baron would in like manner be to you all that a husband need be. I

see in such an event great good for all of us, but most of all for you. Your happiness is my first consideration in the matter. Pray, believe that."

Mrs. Dysart spoke with the firmness of conviction, and it was not without its influence upon Helen.

"Mother, dear mother, is not all this premature, — a fancy of your own? Baron Waldeyer has shown nothing but very great politeness toward me, and that is sufficiently explained by his affection for his sister. She gave me a beautiful turquoise the other day, — you know the turquoise turns yellow whenever a lie is near, — and a little after she said that it was no part of her purpose to commend the baron to me."

"I dare say that is true," said her mother. "She has said nothing whatever to me on the subject; but I know his admiration for you is perfectly spontaneous and sincere, and just as well I know that such a tie would make her happy as nothing else could. Now, dear Helen, we will not talk more just now; but think well of it, and be ready with your answer when he comes to plead for himself, as he certainly will."

"I will think of it. Good-night, mamma."

The baron meanwhile had been taking an evening tour of the shops, one result of which Helen found on her table when she reached her room. In a case of white vellum was a thin folio volume, bound in the finest tree-calf, with tracery of gold upon the borders. The volume contained forty large octavo photographs of the scenes which she had visited under the guidance of the baron, — Interlaken, Mürren, the Wengern Alp, the

ice-cairn of Grindelwald, and others, and this note, bearing the crest and monogram of the Waldeyers: —

Will Miss Dysart accept these souvenirs of the past month, as an acknowledgment of the great pleasure which her society has conferred upon

ADOLPHE DE WALDEYER.

No imaginable gift from him could have pleased Helen more, and as she turned the pages she said, "This will be a treasure forever, — but, oh dear! oh dear! what shall I do?"

With all her heart she wished that Robert had written. He might have done so, she thought, in all those long days upon the steamer, or since reaching New York. If he had started on his five days' journey into the heart of the continent without writing, eighteen or twenty days more must pass before his letter could reach her. And here was the baron, about to open siege on the lone fortress of her heart, supported by her two mothers, her father, and, for a wonder, Julia; and her only ally had been silenced and sent away to the other side of the world. Was not all that her mother had said, in favor of the baron, true?

They were going to visit the baroness, — Mrs. Dysart was resolved upon it. Helen felt that the crisis of her fate was coming. Why *was* Mr. Audran so silent? Was he also conscious of a reaction after what Julia had called "the glamour of a mountain escapade"? Did he think their late episode might as well be forgotten for a time? Must she wait his time?

She smiled, and she sighed too, as before her dressing-glass she unrobed her round white shoulders and dimpled arms; and she said to the fair reflection, half aloud, "Indeed, I ought to belong to some man, and some man ought to belong to me. It is a sin against nature for me to be an old maid."

CHAPTER XVI.

IN COLORADO.

MR. ROBERT AUDRAN and Mr. James Dunphy had alike decided to go over the Atchison, Topeka, and Sante Fé Railway, which, at the date of our story, was about to open for travel the section of the road which enters Pueblo from the east. Each had been assured at Kansas City that the road was already open to that point. The fact, however, was that a trestle two miles east of the town had broken under its first trial, and that trains could not go over it. Ignorant of this fact, Mr. Audran and Mr. Dysart, on the evening of the 27th of July, left Kansas City, and Mr. Dunphy still had the start of them by twelve hours.

All next day they rolled over the endless swells and swales of the prairie, keeping the flat and sharp-cut banks of the Arkansas River in sight. Far as eye could reach, on the southern upland, great herds of cattle were feeding; here and there a solitary herder urged his wiry Mexican pony up the long green slope, the lariat hanging in heavy loops from his saddle-bow. All about them was the limitless, undulating plain, with now and then a break where the yellow limestone shelved off to a lower level. Rarely did a sign of human life appear

except alongside the track, where an occasional gang of laborers stood leaning on their spades as the train went hurtling by, a cluster of their grimy tents standing in the background. Now and then a convoy of canvas-covered wagons was seen creeping over the monotonous green distance. Here and there, on the far horizon, a pale blue smoke showed that fire, first and most manifold of human tools, was at work. A few white-bellied antelopes were feeding in some hollow of the sward, or a prairie-dog village was passed, where the gophers sat atop of a little mound of yellow earth, and dived into their burrows as the train sped through. Occasionally a mound of white rose on the sere surface, where the skeletons of buffalo lay bleaching in the constant sun and infrequent rains. At long intervals, on the margin of some shallow, winding valley, where the wash of the spring rains ran down to the Arkansas, stood the sod-walled and sod-roofed hut of the homesteader, and planted about it the sweet-briar, the morning glory, the scarlet creeper, or the sunflower, — showing that the rudest life still counts among its necessities some token of grace and beauty.

A little after noon, at a station, the telegraph reported that the train in advance of their own was off the track, from spreading of the newly laid rails. A wrecking party had gone forward on a hand-car to its aid, and their own train must wait until the way was clear. The passengers, now very few, got off, to pass the weary interval as best they might. They were told that the locomotive would give three successive whistles before the start. Robert proposed to Mr. Dysart that they should walk forward.

"As well walk forward as any way," replied Mr. Dysart. "One mile of this country is as like any other mile as one section of railroad track is like the next. It is more same and wearisome than the sea. Life here would be unendurable."

"And yet," said Robert, "it is hardly more dull than was northern Illinois when your life began. Your son Eugene will live to see, all over this great American desert, as it used to be called, thick-set towns, overhung by smoke from factory chimneys, cheerful farm-houses nestling in groves of trees, and railroad trains everywhere."

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Dysart. "We cannot exactly see what needs or what forces are to produce these changes; but if we wait long enough, there they are. It is not our decree, but it comes about. Do you remember the closing couplet of Bryant's hymn for the inauguration of the Centennial Exposition? —

> 'Thou leadest man, wandering bold but blind,
> To mighty ends not yet revealed.'"

"Yes," said Robert. "When I saw the peasants on the Rhine, carrying earth in baskets to make a little painful terrace where a vine might grow, or in the Alps, clearing hollows in the rock to put in a handful of barley, I thought of the miles of bountiful soil waiting here, and calling for some one to come and till and reap. And they will come, — the Saxon, the Celt, and the Scot; the Teuton, the Finn, and the Pole; the Sclav, the Tuscan, and the Iberian, — they will all come and

fuse themselves into the American, — a race which cannot but be the richest in collected powers and germinal force which the world has ever seen. They are the raw material, these new-comers, and the machineries of republican freedom will transform them into a fabric like our own."

"That is well said," added Mr. Dysart. "It is the republic, the commonwealth, which assimilates them, just as republican Rome assimilated the Samnites and Volsci and Veii far more completely than did imperial Rome the Gaul and the Dacian."

"And the thing which has been shall be," said Robert. "It makes little difference who lives or dies, who reigns or administers: there will be centralizers and communists, reformers and rings, zealots and sceptics, vice that destroys and virtue that redeems; but all the time a rising level, a scheme in which one license curbs another, and the multitude of minor conflicts prevents, because it makes unnecessary, the greater revolutions which must exist in a less elastic order of things. Hark! There are the three whistles. We must go back."

When they passed over the scene of the disaster, they were told that the other train was only half an hour in advance of them. At half-past six they reached the end of the route. The broken trestle was a mile ahead; beyond that, two miles farther, lay Pueblo. One by one, in the course of the day, the passengers had dropped off. Robert and Mr. Dysart only were proposing to go beyond the construction camp where the track ceased. This consisted of five or six freight or box cars, on a

temporary siding, in which had been roughly fitted up sleeping and eating accommodations for those in the employ of the railroad company. A gang of some thirty coarsely dressed men was lounging about them. The prospect for a halt was uninviting, and Robert said to Mr. Dysart, "We must get to Pueblo somehow, for the night, if we can. I think it can be done." And he went to reconnoitre.

On the skirts of the crowd, a large sombrero pulled well down over his eyes, was Mr. James Dunphy, who had arrived half an hour earlier, and now recognized with alarm Mr. Dysart and Robert as they descended from the train. For him there was but one explanation of their presence: they were on his track, and would be at Mohler and David's mine to-morrow, having with them a sheriff for his special benefit. He had a great respect for Mr. Audran's powers, which had twice before exposed and thwarted him. Dark thoughts came into his evil brain; he skulked behind a car, and watched the movements of the pair.

Robert hunted up the foreman of the construction party, and learned that a horse, and a rude wagon made for prairie driving, was obtainable, and that it was perfectly practicable to follow a track made by teams, along the side of the railway, into the town of Pueblo. The wagon would carry two, and only two; and Robert made a bargain for the use of it, and for its return from Pueblo in the morning. Then he went back with the news to Mr. Dysart. It would be nearly an hour before they could start, he explained, as the horse had to be

brought in from the prairie and have a feed of grain; but the drive would not take more than an hour, so that they would be housed in Pueblo by nine o'clock. It was not yet eight of the summer evening, but night was closing in still and dark after a hot day.

"We may get wet," said Robert, as he glanced at the piling thunder-clouds which climbed the sky above the ridge of the Rocky Mountains just before them. "Our thunder-showers here are sometimes very sharp and sudden. What do you say to that, Mr. Dysart?"

"Oh, so far as I am concerned, I would rather be out all night than shut up with that rough crowd in such a vile place as this. Let us go ahead, by all means."

"All right, my dear sir; only if you should happen to get a taste of one of our cyclones, you will remember it, I can assure you."

Jim Dunphy, who had seen Robert at the stables, or shanty used for that purpose, had easily divined his purpose, even without the assistance of the groom, who informed him that two gentlemen were going to drive Captain Talbot's mare into Pueblo, and put her up at the Chico stables.

"If they get there, that is," muttered Mr. Dunphy. "They might get struck by lightning, or something else, first." He thought of the repeating-rifle which David had instructed him to bring from Chicago.

"I'll let that damned Pharisee know that he don't smash my shoulders with a stone and cut my ear with a bullet for nothing," he meditated. "It 's my turn to shoot now, with something to be depended on. A revolver is

handy enough in a scrimmage, but it ain't like a long-range rifle, calibre 45, and sixteen balls in the breech." He looked carefully at his gun, and then walked rapidly up the track.

It was already very dark when Robert and Mr. Dysart started. The heat-lightning was flashing vividly in the northwest, and by its glow the solemn forms of the great mountains, from the two Spanish Peaks in the south to the black Chian in the north, were outlined. They had not accomplished the first mile when the gathering storm thickened about them. Far away in the hills they heard its roar, as they tore along the road, blinded and dazzled by the lightning, which now seemed rather to blaze than to flash; wreaths and scrolls of flame seemed to dance upward from the ground around them, and to sweep and sway along the surface.

They were just at the entrance of a ravine, which descended toward the river along a little stream. On the right and above them was a limestone shelf, at times receding from and at times approaching the road; on the left a grassy meadow, running up to the low bluff. The mare was restive; she seemed terribly frightened, and began to rear and plunge; then, as the rain swept down in a flood borne on a whirlwind, she stopped short and would not move, but threw her head wildly up, snorted, and whinnied. Robert sprang to her head, and, turning it from the blinding rain, held her fast by the bridle. The glow of lightning was almost incessant, and Mr. Dysart too got out and stood at the other side of the beast. Jim Dunphy lay on the low

limestone bluff above, thirty yards to the right, resting his rifle on a pile of white stone. By the quick-coming flashes he got and corrected his range, and that range covered Robert, Mr. Dysart, and the head of the horse between them.

"What 's that?" cried Mr. Dysart, as a flash leaped from the ground above, and something whizzed over their heads. "Can it be lightning?"

It was dark for a moment, then another blaze of lightning showed the two men standing by the horse's head. Again the flash sprang from the bluff and the whizzing sound was heard.

"Clear the wagon and drop on the ground!" said Robert, in a quick, low tone. "Some rascal has got rifle range on us."

Mr. Dysart flung himself off a few paces, and lay on his face in the grass. Robert still stood at the horse's head. Again the flash sprang from the ground, and a slight sting on the shoulder told him that he was hit.

"The mare must take care of herself," thought he; and he threw himself in the grass, and, with slightly raised head, scanned the knoll whence the flash came. The rain-cloud had passed, but the lightning still blazed; and with the next flash Robert saw, not thirty yards away, the gleam of a rifle-barrel over a pile of white stones, and a man's head behind it. He crawled ten yards one side, and lay still in the grass. What was to be done? Should he lie still until he was discovered, and again fired upon? There! A blinding, quivering gleam sprang into his eyes, a rattling, crashing sound struck

through his head, and with it the flash of thought, — killed!

But a moment after, rolling in the wet grass and in the darkness, bewildered, weak, he yet knew that he was not killed; for he heard the ripping rattle of the wagon, as the mare wrenched herself out of the shafts, and dashed away. He fixed his eyes on the white pile of stones, and waited for the next flash. He did not see the gleam of the rifle. Again. Still he did not see it. He crept up through the weeds. Again, at ten yards, he saw only a head and an outstretched arm. Quick as thought he sprang toward the figure, and launched himself prone upon it. No grasp tightened upon him. He had seized and was holding in his clinch an unmoving form.

He drew himself back upon his knees; and the next glare of lightning showed beneath him a livid face and frothing lips. He fumbled darkly at the chest for the heart; but no beat was felt within. Then he called loudly, "Dysart, come up here! He 's dead! he 's dead!"

So it was. The flash which had almost stunned Robert had leaped along that barrel of steel; swiftly flowed its fine wave through brain and marrow, and all was over.

Drenched and dizzy, the two men kneeled over the dead, and Robert exclaimed, with a shudder, "It is Jim Dunphy, Mr. Dysart; it is the man I drove away from your house on the river. Thank God, he did not die by my hand, nor you and I by his!"

The lightning still flickered along the ragged and

drooping edges of the black clouds which were whirling toward the southeast; but through the breaking rift in the north the scattered stars shone, and round them the air was still, and full of spring-like odor. Far off and faintly came the galloping tramp of the mare, as she sped back to her stable; and in another moment the waning moon, which a month before had lighted Robert on the crest of Mount Rigi, shone fitfully out of the scattering clouds.

A shattered stock, parted from the barrel, was all that was left of the gun which had carried their death in its chambers; and limp and flaccid lay the hand which had covered the trigger.

"Merciful God!" exclaimed Mr. Dysart, "what an hour of wrath and retribution!"

"Let us see if he had your papers on him," said Robert; and, thrusting his hand into the inside pocket of Dunphy's vest, he drew forth a morocco wallet, — the same which had been snatched from Mr. Dysart's table barely a week before.

In the misty moonlight Mr. Dysart recognized the papers, maps, and contract which had brought such peril to him and such sudden doom to their holder.

"What are we to do next?" he asked.

Robert thought a moment, and looked at his watch, — half-past nine. "That horse will be back in his stable in ten minutes, and most likely a searching party will be sent out for us in the course of an hour. We might go to meet it. But that will keep us under watch and in turmoil all night. I think we would better walk into

Pueblo. From the shape of this ravine, we must be near the basin in which the town stands."

"I agree with you," said Mr. Dysart. "We will leave notice where we can be found to-morrow."

Robert tore a leaf from his pocket-book, and wrote as follows:—

"This man shot three times at us, at short range, in the storm, and would have killed us, if a stroke of lightning had not killed him. We have gone on foot to the Lindell House, Pueblo, where we can be seen to-morrow.

"ROBERT AUDRAN, of Fountain, Col.
"ADRIAN DYSART, of New York."

Taking each his satchel from the overturned wagon, the two friends went down to the mouth of the dark ravine; and there before them, not half a mile away, shone the lights of Pueblo.

An hour later the loafers in the billiard-room of the Lindell House were wondering who those swell fellows could be who looked as if they had had such a devilish good ducking. The prevailing opinion was that they had strayed from the Government Survey in the South Park.

Among the papers found in the pocket-book was a letter from Mohler to Dunphy, promising him a fifth interest in the mine, if he recovered the contract from Mr. Dysart, and half the face-value of any notes recovered with it.

Wet and weary as they were, there yet remained something for Messrs. Audran and Dysart to do. This was to find a magistrate, make report of such facts as it was necessary to communicate, and obtain assurance that at daylight a guard should be placed over Dunphy's remains, and an inquest held at nine o'clock. After this, Robert telegraphed to his partner to expect him the next day; and Mr. Dysart arranged that Mohler and David should be summoned to meet him at Mr. Audran's house on the day after the morrow.

At the hour appointed for the inquest the sunlit bluff where the body of Dunphy lay was crowded by men, among whom were the foreman of the railroad camp, the magistrate, coroner, physician, and a number of citizens summoned by the coroner. The doctor proceeded to make his examination as an expert. No external wound or bruise was found, except the partially healed cut upon the left ear which had been made by Robert's pistol at Glenwood, and a black and blue bruise from the blow of the stone between his shoulders. The body showed none of the rigidity which quickly follows death; an artery was opened in the arm, and a stream of dark blood flowed from it; the right eyeball was burst and collapsed, and the brow and lashes singed or burnt away. The physician pronounced that the man had died by lightning, which probably had passed along the barrel of his gun to the eye nearest the breech, and so to the brain; and the jury gave verdict in accordance with this testimony. The magistrate released Mr. Audran and Mr. Dysart from observation, and directed

burial on the spot where the body lay; and Robert and his friend took the noon train for Fountain, twenty miles northward from Pueblo.

"Have you any idea into what sort of a place you are going when you go to my house?" said Robert, as they neared the end of their journey.

"No, my dear sir, I have not speculated upon the subject in the least," said Mr. Dysart.

"I suppose," said Robert, "that a large proportion of the inhabitants of this region would think it even less attractive than that camp of which you said such uncomplimentary things last night. There was some life and stir there: there is only silence and solitude at my home; and the house in which I live would not rent in the suburbs of New York for fifty dollars a year."

They were passing, as he spoke, through the little hamlet of Fountain,—twenty or thirty small houses clustered about the railroad station; and beyond, on the hillside toward the east, Robert pointed out a low building, draped with vines. "There is my house," said he.

Mr. Dysart looked about him. They were in a valley, the bottom of which was not more than half a mile across. The western wall of this valley rose rapidly into mountains, scantily clothed with dark and stunted pines, the eastern climbed by irregular terraces to the border of that great upland plain which slopes gradually from the Rocky Mountains to the Ozark Range of Missouri, five hundred miles away. North and south, far as the eye could reach, appeared the foothills of the

Rocky Range. In the northwest, over the bold shoulder of Chian Mountain, rose the vast cone of Pike's Peak, bare and brown save for streaks of snow in its ravines; and dim in the southwest the Greenhorn and Sangue di Christo Ranges and the blue, twin Spanish Peaks reared their lofty heads.

"It is hard to realize that those mountains are as high or higher than Mont Blanc," said Mr. Dysart, "or that the bottom of this valley where we stand is itself higher than Mount Washington or any mountain east of the Mississippi. There are none of the grand effects of the Swiss mountains or the Mexican. Why are they not covered with snow, as most high mountains are, even in the tropics?"

"They are for eight months in the year," replied Robert; "but never with such masses of snow as lie on the Swiss mountains. Standing in this deep interior of the continent, the winds which sweep up from the Pacific drop their burden of water on the western or snowy range, and those from the Gulf and the Atlantic are lost and dried out in the vast sweep of arid country over which they pass before they get to us. Our rainfall is only about a third as much as that of the Atlantic coast. Rains and forests are the great lack here. How they always go together, — wood and water! Each generates and perpetuates the other.

"There is a specimen of what irrigation will do in that wheat-field of mine," he went on, pointing to a field of about ten acres on the slope beyond. "Do you see on the upper edge a line which runs round the knolls

northward toward the river? That is my ditch, in which a clear stream is always flowing. It is hidden on the upper border of this field by the growing grain. Once in fifteen feet along the top of this field it is tapped, and a thread of water from each breach runs down the slope until absorbed by the thirsty soil. That field will yield at least forty-five bushels to the acre, — five times as much as the Genesee valley yields, three times as much as the Iowa prairie, twice as much as eastern Kansas; and the crop is sure because the conditions are certain. The field is never to lack water and never to have excess, because the supply is exactly measured to its needs. If the Lybian sands of Egypt have been one of the world's granaries for four thousand years, by the aid of irrigation, why should not ours become so as well?

"Do you see that green hill which pushes into the valley, a mile down there, and the buildings on it? That is my new estate, — Maritana. There you will find a house somewhat better than this. But come in, my dear sir, and let us see what we can do for you."

The house was certainly plain enough, as Robert had said. In its first estate it had been simply an oblong box, twelve feet wide and twice as long, with a roof of double pitch, making within one long, narrow room, nine feet high, and a capacious attic overhead. On either side of this Robert had built a flat-roofed addition, of equal width with the central portion, but not so high, these additions extending somewhat farther toward the rear. The whole was not unlike one of those little wooden churches, with nave and transepts, which

are so common at seaside watering-places. Each addition was partitioned into two rooms. In the south transept were Mr. Audran's quarters, in the north Mr. Maxwell's, the middle building serving as a common dining-room and office, being divided for that purpose by a Japanese screen.

Robert's quarters were not unattractive. Bookcases, shoulder high, ran round the sides of the sitting-room, surmounted by bronzes, busts, and statuettes. A few small paintings of some merit hung on the walls, and every available space was filled with photographs, engravings, and woodcuts. A Smyrna rug covered the floor; a Damascus hanging curtained the door into his sleeping-room; over the fireplace were the crossed swords, the pistols, and the cap, of his military days. Souvenirs of many lands, types of many races, and relics of many eras had met to ornament this little room upon the frontier. The nucleus of a library, in law, history, classics, and science, stood on the shelves, beside herd-books, turf-registers, dictionaries of the arts, and the Encyclopædia Britannica. The south window, shaded by a deep awning, looked out over beds of flowers to the green and misty plain.

"No, indeed," said Mr. Dysart, "I did not know to what sort of a place I was going. Your room here, Mr. Audran, speaks of all space and all time; and yet I cannot see it without feeling, as my daughters do, that the world of men, rather than the wilds of nature, is your rightful home."

"So I once hoped," said Robert; "but Providence

closed that career for me with a ball through my lungs, at Spottsylvania. I doubtless owe my life to the healing of Nature here in her far and uncontaminated home. When I came to Colorado, three years ago, I was a pale, stooping invalid, unable to breathe without pain, and with nerves which allowed little sleep and no intellectual labor; and now I feel my youth renewed. To live was the first necessity with me then, and I could hardly have found elsewhere a climate so restorative, or so fair a road to fortune and to leisure, as I found here. There is a fair amount of satisfaction, too, in my work. If my irrigation methods prove a success, they will make the population of this region possible; a vast area of fruitless soil will become productive; the mining industry of these hills will be made practicable by cheapened supplies. Human use and profit, life and its rewards, will be everywhere. You must see my Durhams and Devons, and then you will know that when I make a sale, I not only put money in my own purse, but am starting improved breeds of cattle for others, to thrive and increase after I am gone. So I am content here, — I have been, at least; and if, by chance, when first I walk Broadway, or sit in the library at Cambridge, I fall to thinking of my life as one of exile, it is not long before I weary of drones and drudges and dolls, and am ready to come back to mountains and plains, ditches and cattle."

"I can understand it and believe it," said Mr. Dysart. "And we who live in the world owe great thanks to such as you, who start the streams of industry and trade

by which we live. The world needs just this work; and how could it be better done than by such as you, who bring knowledge and inspiration to mould the destinies of these new States?" And the longer he stayed, the more this feeling grew on Mr. Dysart.

About noon of the following day, Messrs. Mohler and David made their appearance at the ranch, and found Mr. Dysart awaiting them. Mohler came forward to meet him, with apparent frankness and complacency. "How are you, Mr. Dysart? We were not expecting to see you, but are glad of it, notwithstanding. How comes it that you are out here?"

"I had the opportunity of Mr. Audran's very good company," said Mr. Dysart, "and I thought it was time to see for myself about this mine. How are you getting on?"

"Well, fairly. We are two hundred and fifty feet on the vein from the bottom of the incline, and have about six hundred tons on the dump, that will go, perhaps, $30 a ton, — $20,000 in that pile."

Mr. Mohler was careful not to say that the entire product of the last month would average not less than $200 to the ton.

"Well," said Mr. Dysart, "that is a fair if not a great return for your capital and labor. Mr. Mohler, do you know a man named James Dunphy?"

The partners exchanged a startled glance, but Mohler answered promptly, "Yes; he worked for us awhile, but we discharged him a fortnight ago, and he left for New York, I believe. Has he called upon you?"

"Did you employ him to do any business for you in New York?" continued Mr. Dysart.

"I asked him to bring me a Winchester rifle when he came back," said David.

"I have here a letter," continued Mr. Dysart, drawing a paper from his pocket, "apparently from Mr. Mohler to this Dunphy, offering him an interest of one fifth in the mine in case he should recover the contract which you made with me, and one half the face of any of your notes recovered with it. Your agent, Dunphy, entered my house at night, gagged and robbed me, and escaped with all you bade him recover; and not forty-eight hours ago he shot at Mr. Audran and myself, and would have killed us if he had not first been killed by a stroke of lightning. You will find the details in this morning's Pueblo paper, if they interest you. And now I show you the contract, to recover which you have twice put my life in danger, and that of Mr. Audran, which is quite as valuable. Perhaps you had better retire and digest the situation before I hear from you. I believe I have nothing more to say just now."

The two men, whom Mr. Dysart had not allowed to sit down, became very unsteady on their feet, and went out of the door without a word.

Mr. Dysart and Robert saw them go a little way down the lawn, and sit down on a bank. In half an hour they came back, and Mohler addressed Mr. Dysart:—

"Do you believe, sir, that we had a hand in any plan for robbing and murder, or would have had anything to

do with Dunphy if we had known that he thought of such a thing?"

"I do," said Mr. Dysart; "it looks to me very like it."

"May I ask, then, what you intend to do about it?" said Mohler.

"You may," answered Mr. Dysart. "I intend to see you punished, if not as you deserve, at least so far as the law will admit."

"Surely, we can settle the matter on some terms, Mr. Dysart," interposed David.

"Yes, sir; and the terms are these: I own seven twelfths of your mine; you, five. On the basis of my investment, your share is worth ten thousand dollars; mine, fourteen. For the sum of two thousand dollars, which I here show you, you are to give a deed of your interest in the mine, and all the mining property of all sorts, to Mr. Robert Audran. The sheriff will hold a warrant for you, on a charge of robbery and attempt to kill; two days will be given you to get out of the State. Beyond that time, the state prison is the only place in it which is open for you."

"Come, David," said Mohler, "we'll get out of this."

"Stop!" said Mr. Dysart. "You had better not step into the hands of the officer. He is in the hall. If you go through that door, his hand will be on you for ten years or more. The terms I offer are the best you will ever get. Your partner has paid for your crime and his with his life. I give you yours, and the chance to rid the State of your vile presence. There may be a

place where you can breathe freely and have such chance as you will allow yourselves to make an honest living. Here there is but one safe place for you, felons and thieves as you are."

"Don't be so damned hard on a fellow when he is down! Would you strip us of all our property and all our hopes at once?" whined Mohler.

"I have told you what I will do to-day. I give you liberty and hope, — both forfeit, — and I take your mine, which, on your showing, will barely return me my money. To-morrow I will take your mine and your liberty together. Here is Mr. Maxwell, a notary public of the county; here are the maps and plans certified by the county clerk, the record of your location and your claim. Sign that deed, or within fifteen minutes you will go to jail. Now take your choice."

The men conferred together for a moment, and then Mohler said, "It 's all up with us. We 'll sign."

Mr. Dysart stepped to the hall-door, and called, "Sheriff Hawkins and Mr. Maxwell, will you please step in?" The two entered, and Mr. Dysart continued, "Gentlemen, there has been difficulty between Mohler and David and myself. I was injured, and proposed to have them arrested; but the matter will be arranged between us if they freely sign this deed of the Clarita mine and all the property to Mr. Robert Audran, for the consideration of two thousand dollars. They have said they will do so, and I would like to have you witness their signature."

He pushed the deed across the table, and the two

men signed it. Mr. Audran pushed over the table four five-hundred-dollar bills; they took them, and rose to leave.

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Dysart. "The civil process is hereby at an end, but there is a criminal charge against them as well; and, sheriff, I give you warrant to arrest them on Saturday morning, if they can be found in the State. You will please to take notice."

But Saturday morning saw the pair far on their way to Idaho, beyond pursuit.

"Now, Mr. Audran," said Mr. Dysart, "five twelfths of this mine is your property, and you will have a general supervision of it. You shall pay me two thousand dollars when your share has realized you that sum, — not till then. Anything more must be considered as your salary for supervision."

CHAPTER XVII.

HOHENTAUBEN.

NOT anticipating a long stay at Geneva, Mrs. Dysart had telegraphed from Chamouny to Paris, ordering her letters sent to the baroness's château, near Colmar. But day after day the beautiful shores of Lake Leman beguiled them on, and Julia's promised letter lay meantime with others at Hohentauben. Their only tidings from home, therefore, was this line, written by Mr. Dysart, on the day of his hurried start for Colorado: —

GLENWOOD, July 24.

DEAREST EUGENIA, — Julia has written you a full account of the burglary and attack, which might have ended Heaven only knows how, if Mr. Audran had not appeared.

My loss is serious, and my only chance to recover is in instant pursuit. So I go to Colorado to-night with Mr. Audran, who seems to be the good genius of the family. I shall write every day or two, and Julia will keep you informed of things at home.

Meantime, keep Manuela quiet. Don't let us have too many kinds of turmoil on our hands at once. Assure

Helen that she shall not regret any concession which she may make to prevent trouble. Love to her and Eugene.

Affectionately, ADRIAN DYSART.

Of course this letter was unintelligible to the family. Of burglary and violence they knew nothing; but two things were clear, — Mr. Dysart had suffered some serious loss, and he could not, even in a hurry, forget to urge on all the family that the baroness was to be conciliated. This naturally added to Mrs. Dysart's desire to go to Hohentauben; and, on the day after the receipt of this letter, the party started.

The express train from Geneva to Colmar requires twelve hours for the transit, — too long a journey for Mrs. Dysart; and it was, therefore, arranged that their first stage should be Bâle, and thence to Hohentauben on the second day. The baroness urged with much cordiality that Walter should make one of the party; and he was easily persuaded to do so.

At Colmar they found the carriages of the château waiting to receive them. The valleys of the Weiss and the Fecht, entering those of the Ill and the Rhine at Colmar from the west, unite to form a fair, wide basin of level and fertile land, encircled by mountains.

Over excellent roads, through avenues of willows and tall poplars, and "garden, field, and fold studding the billowy sweep of ripened grain," to the bridge across the Fecht, and upward along its wooded banks, through a close-walled ravine, where overhead tall walnut-trees

filtered a checkered sunlight down on moss-grown rocks and dashing river, and vines hung in golden and crimson masses, — this was the approach to Hohentauben. The fresh green, the cool shade, the clear whistle of the mavis, the thrush pouring its dissolving strain of music through the aisles of the forest, were wonderfully grateful after the heat and rattle of the railway.

A quarter of a mile farther, they came to the summit of the ravine; and before them lay a lake-like expansion of the river, more than a mile in length. Green forests and greener fields, and, at the farther end, a forest-crowned crag, bordered this beautiful water. On a distant hill were the ruins of an ancient abbey, far in the southwest rose the towers of Munster, and in the background the ridge of the Vosges. Just above them, on the right, lay a smooth, swarded slope; on its farther side, backed by the walnut and beechen woods through which they had been riding, stood the old, irregular pile of Hohentauben. From the ivy-mantled tower on the corner, the blue banner of the Waldeyers drooped its silken folds in the languid summer air. The drive wound up the slope, through borders of old-time box, which shed a quaint aroma on the air. Banks of foliage-plants and broad-leaved canna and caladium, spotted the lawn; and the spruce, the larch, the acacia, and the purple beech, singly and in copses, relieved its broad surface. A line of noble elms along the river-bank lifted their vine-draped stems and spreading crowns like so many green fountains. On a knoll which overhung the water was a

platform of tessellated marble, enclosed by a balustrade, and covered by an awning of two colors; beneath, at a quay of stone, a trim little yacht rocked, and fluttered its pennon of blue.

The original structure of Hohentauben had been a quadrangle enclosing a court, at its corners towers, the whole surrounded by a moat. The whole western front between the towers — a hundred and thirty feet in length — had been taken down by the late Baron Waldeyer, and the interval filled by a modern structure, with an elevation of two and a half stories, facing the lake, built of gray Caen-stone, in the Italian style, and covered by a flat roof, with projecting eaves. The width of this structure, from the front to the interior court, was forty feet, ten of which were given to an enclosed gallery on the rear or court side. This ran the whole length, and gave access to the series of rooms which stretched along the front, and looked out upon the river. They were, in order from the southern front, a reception room, a music room, parlor, dining-room, library, boudoir, — all looking over the moat, which had been covered in with a glazed roof, and served as a winter-garden and conservatory. Elsewhere the moat had been filled and levelled, so as to form a portion of the lawn. Above the rooms mentioned were a similar series of chambers, and the northern wing of the quadrangle held the offices and servants' quarters. Upon the eastern wall of the court trellised vines and wall-fruit were trained. The exposure lay open to the sun, and shielded from the winds; and just now the walls

were loaded with a great crop of apricots, nectarines, and almonds. Rosy clusters of the Chasselas grape alternated with the black Frontignan and Muscat of Alexandria. Within the sheltered court the orange, the fig, and the olive had been nursed into wholesome and fruitful growth. Nowhere was anything gay or garish or conspicuously new. The furniture could not be found in any catalogue or ordered from any magazine; it was of no fashion. Use, service, and intrinsic beauty was the characteristic of each article, and all the world had been drawn upon to form the collection. There was a bamboo sofa from Padang, a basket-chair from Pennsylvania, a tall carved clock from the Hague, a locker from Canton, old English sideboards, carved chests from Venice, rugs of Norwegian eider-breasts and of African leopard-skins, vases of madrepore from the Indian Ocean and terra-cotta from Fiesole, pitchers of Cellini and cups of Palissy.

The baroness herself conducted her guests to their chambers, where everything was sweet and fresh and plain, the furniture, like that of the rooms below, being rare rather than rich or elaborate. The wide fireplaces were filled with blooming and odorous plants, and yellow jessamines and Banksia roses were trained between the windows, over which white awnings hung low, as a screen from the afternoon sun. Each room opened upon the wide gallery, and the summer air had free course.

When Madame Waldeyer left them, her maid appeared, and cared for their comfort as only one can do who

is familiar with the wants and habits of a refined lady.

Mrs. Dysart was very sensitive to the sentiments and harmonies of places, and, as she lay resting upon her lounge before the window, she remarked to Helen, "There is something noble in this quietness and serenity, this comfort, — delicate, ample, and complete. Everywhere there is something to notice and to think about, but nothing for show. How grateful such rest is, and how much more restful for the fitness of its surroundings!"

"Yes," answered Helen; "it is all like the baroness herself, — 'touched to fine issues, sweet, exact, serene.'"

"I shall get well here," said Mrs. Dysart. "I shall sleep without being either anxious or expectant. A good long rest."

A servant entered at that moment with a letter. It was Julia's, which had been so long awaiting their coming.

It bore date July 24, the day after the burglary, of which it gave a detailed account, not to be recited here. It fairly acknowledged Mr. Audran's great service, and the aid which he was likely to render in the recovery of the lost papers; but underneath the acknowledgments Helen recognized with regret and Mrs. Dysart with satisfaction that Julia showed no personal admiration of him nor any enthusiasm in his behalf.

"Mr. Audran," said Julia, "has certainly proved himself a brave man and a useful friend, so much so that

one could wish he were a little less self-conscious and deliberate. 'Less of the pattern and more of the stuff,'" she added, "would suit me better."

"That is my idea exactly," said Mrs. Dysart. "He has an ingenious and well-furnished mind, of no great compass; but such as it is, it is enough to control all his impulses, which are many, but not mighty. Entertaining and honest he may be, but he is not attractive or magnetic. Julia feels it just as I do."

"We will not talk about him," said Helen, with a trace of bitterness in her heart, if not in her tone. And as she went away to dress for dinner she said to herself, "Either he does not want me very much, or he very much underrates the strength of the current which is setting against him here, — absence, silence, the bidding of my father, — renewed even in his presence, for father's letter was written just before they started together for the West, — the whole weight of obligation to both of my mothers and my sister, and all the charm of this beautiful home and all this fine estate. Why does he not think of these? Does he mean to prove me?

"Did he not say in so many words that I must come to him, if I came at all, with the whole force of my nature and the whole breadth of my understanding? What is that but demanding of me a complete, final, unconditional surrender, which takes no account of any opposing influences, or of any possible destiny of which he is not the almoner? Is not that winning rather than wooing? Is it not the temper of a hard master, inspired by determination rather than by love? Was there fate

or providence in the fact that I so squarely refused to hear him? I thought it was on his account, but it may be that my good genius hoodwinked me.

"Come in, Alice," in answer to a knock; and Alice entered, dressed for dinner, and as pretty as laughing eyes, fair, unsunned brow, ruddy browned cheeks, and a dainty French gown can make a girl of nineteen.

"Can I help you, Nelly? Won't you be late for dinner? It would never do to keep this grand *ménage* waiting. Do you know that I am very much impressed with the establishment? Everything is so complete and so orderly. The whole house seems to have been made for itself and by itself. Things harmonize, but they don't match."

"Yes," said Helen, "I feel it. Did you know that my mother has a letter from Julia?"

"No. Is there anything special in it? Do tell me what she says now about Mr. Audran."

"Yes, there is something very special. The house at Glenwood has been entered by burglars. Father was bound and gagged, and what next might have happened no one can tell; but, fortunately, Mr. Audran came on the scene in the nick of time, drove the burglars off, and wounded one of them. Now my father and he have gone to Colorado together, in pursuit of some papers which were stolen. I dare say mamma will give you the letter after dinner."

"So Mr. Audran has done your family another great service, Helen?"

"Yes, a very great one; and he was there at precisely

the critical moment, just as he was for me at Handeck. Father might have died, suffocated in a bag, and I *must* have died, drowned and mangled in a pool, but for him. Is it not strange that it should have happened so twice?"

"No, not so strange. It is no accident, Helen. He waits and watches for all in whom he is interested. He would not have been near that frightful pool if you had not been in all his thoughts."

"He keeps his thoughts very much to himself, then," said Helen fretfully. "We have not heard a word from him since he left."

"No. Perhaps Walter has a letter by this mail. *We* did not leave him much to say, I fancy. *We* did not answer some of his communications according to his wishes, did we?"

"Mr. Audran is at liberty to say whatever he wishes and whenever he thinks best; and I am at liberty to answer as I think best, too" (majestically).

"You ought not to be angry, Helen, and you have no reason to be in doubt about his feeling for you."

"Supposing he does like me, and supposing, when he had nothing else to do, he did grow a little warm about it. He did not mean it should go any further; and when he drifted away from his intentions, I brought him back to them. Did I not tell you at Interlaken that was all there was of it? And was I not right? Mr. Audran has gone his way; let him go. I did not hasten him or detain him, and I will not."

"And what will you do when he comes back, and says again, with all possible deliberation and emphasis, what he did not think it timely to say before?"

"I do not know why you should catechise me, or why I should answer you any further. My present concern is to be civil to the baroness, who has been so kind to me. Come, you are dressed; go and fetch mamma, and I will be ready in a minute."

The baron and baroness were waiting to receive them. Both were in evening costume, and the baroness wore rich jewels.

"I hope you are all rested after your journey," said Madame Waldeyer. "I should have remembered, Mrs. Dysart, to ask if you would not prefer to dine quietly in your chamber."

"Oh, no, indeed!" said Mrs. Dysart. "I am feeling perfectly well, and not in the least disposed to be alone. This is my first introduction to a French country-house, and everything interests me. You have a charming home, baroness, and I am sure it is your taste which has made it such."

"I am so glad you are pleased with it," replied the baroness. "Nature has done much for us, but the place has been greatly changed since I first saw it."

Then she told the history of the baron's family for two generations. His father, an *emigré* of the French Revolution, had married an English wife, who survived him, and who preferred that her children, born in England, should also be educated there. Adolphe, the

present baron, was eighteen years younger than his brother, and, in accordance with his mother's last request, had been left at school in England until he entered the military academy of St. Cyr.

"Thus, for the first eighteen years of his life," said the baroness, "Adolphe was practically an English boy. When Alexandre brought me here, in 1848, this place was almost a ruin. We lived in the old north wing for two years, while the western front was building; and we lived with almost bare walls and floors until, in the course of our yearly journeys, we picked up whatever furniture you see here. The baron kept his library in advance of all his other appointments; and you, Helen, and you, Walter, will, I know, like to range over it, as you shall. It is not a great library, of course, but it represents almost everything."

The folding-doors of the dining-room were thrown open at that moment, and the butler announced dinner. The baron conducted Mrs. Dysart to the post of honor, near Madame Waldeyer, and the baroness placed Helen on the right of the baron, at the other end of the table. The dinner was simple, but elegant, and beautifully served. The salads and fruits were particularly fine.

"You must have an admirable gardener," said Helen to the baron.

"There she is, at the other end of the table," said Baron Waldeyer. "For more than twenty years Manuela has been the gardener of Hohentauben. All that is good or choice about the place has been formed

under her care. I have watched its growth in my occasional visits to the place; and now that I am legal owner, I feel that her right is far greater than my own."

After two hours at table, they went to the parlor and the western portico. The sun was setting between the peaks of the Vosges, and threw a long band of weltering gold upon the tremulous waters of the lake-like river. The glory shone through the windows of the ruined abbey on the far-off shore, the swallows skimmed the water, and the shrill note of the night-hawk, pursuing the bats which like filmy shapes issued from the crannies of the eastern wing of the castle, blended with the boom of the bittern in the distant marshes. Later, when the lamps were lighted, the baron brought from the library a large map of the surrounding country, and entertained them with local history, and legends from the days of the Crusades to those of the German War.

So ended the first day at Hohentauben; and after our friends had gone to their chambers, the baroness and baron still lingered in the *salon*.

"Manuela," said the baron, "I congratulate you. No one but yourself could have done what you have accomplished, — could have brought these people hither and made friends of them all."

"I hope they are friends," she replied. "It is the only thing I have thought of or wished for since we met."

"I do not wonder," said he. "Helen is a jewel for

any mother to prize, — how much more so for any husband! I should like to know what my chances are with her."

"Are you going to test them, Adolphe?"

"Yes, Manuela, I am. Long ago I made my mind to that, and every day makes me more sure of my own purpose and more impatient of delay. What have you to say to me?"

"Dear Adolphe, I do not know what to say. I hope I am not so selfish, so wrapped up in my own desires, that I cannot feel sympathy and interest for you; and yet — I shall lose her."

"I do not understand you."

"No, I don't suppose you can. But listen: measure my desire for her against your own. You are young; life, with all its great achievements, all its honors and rewards, lies before you. When you want a wife, you have but to go out into the world of women and choose where you will. I am old; there is no future for me, — nothing but years of slow decay, a stain upon my memory, a sting within my conscience. There is no one in all this world except Helen who can lighten and brighten my melancholy lot. If ever she comes to my heart and takes me to hers, the awful wrong which I did against nature, and which has been the bitter drop in every cup of every day, will be compensated and atoned for; for Helen will not give me my desire unless she thinks I have in some way made sufficient atonement.

"What would your success be, if you succeeded?

Something in which instinct, ambition, affection, influences from every side of life, would be blended. What would my success be? Something simpler, rarer, sweeter far, — forgiveness, sympathy, defence."

"But, Manuela, would not mine be yours also, — the best and surest pledge of yours?"

"Yes, Adolphe, if mine came first, and were complete without yours. God knows that I have no wish to narrow or depress the scope of Helen's life. Only let me feel and know that she accepts and enjoys her relation to me, as I do mine to her, and I shall wish her the best husband in the world, — which may be yourself, for all I know. I would not, if I could, interfere with or lessen his claim on her life. She shall keep for him all the confidences and reserves and endearments which are his right, and the right of no one else. But she must give me — and for my own sake — the place which Nature gave, and which by my own fault I forfeited. If she gives it to me for your sake, she does not give it at all. If she will take me first, and then you, you may be nearest and dearest, and I shall be too, *too* happy. But if she cannot incline to you, she may still incline to me; and your suit must not — *must not*, Adolphe! — endanger mine.

"Now you see why I am nervous at the thought of your pressing it, although, as you say, its success would so much enlarge and complete my own. I cannot run the risk of having her driven away from me."

"I will not, Manuela, — indeed I will not. God grant that instead I may bring her closer to you, now and for-

ever! But you do not tell me what you think of my chances."

"Chances! There is no chance about it. I resent the word. Helen will not love you because you are the Baron Waldeyer, — young, distinguished, rich; she will not love you for your importunity. She will love you if you are her ideal of what a man should be, not else."

"Still, you do not tell me; perhaps you cannot. But do you think Mr. Audran is in the way?"

"When Mr. Audran was here, I thought he might be; but Mrs. Dysart assures me that there is no pledge between them. Both she and Mr. Dysart have said that Helen is her own mistress, and free. Mr. Audran has not written to her, I am almost sure; at least, she has received no letter from him since he left. It would seem that he asks nothing. I could not bear such silence, for my part; and, if you are to speak, perhaps it would better be while that silence is unbroken. I think the whole family are pleased thus far with Hohentauben. But that may not be for long. Travellers generally are not content to halt long in one place. Our resources here are soon exhausted. When they have seen everything, then will come the desire to move on, — weariness, impatience. You should not wait for that time. Better either speak soon, or wait until, wearied and impatient elsewhere, their memories turn back pleasantly to us. You must study opportunity; but you must remember that she is accustomed to win golden opinions, — to pursuit and to siege. A cold and deliberate lover will not succeed with her."

"Well, Manuela, you can hardly expect me to rehearse in your presence whatever I may have to say to her. If I put into words the half of what has been in my heart and on my lips a hundred times, she cannot hear me with indifference."

"Go, then, Adolphe, and all my prayers and all my heart go with you!"

It had been agreed over night that Helen should attend the baroness in her usual early morning inspection of her whole establishment; and at half-past seven she was awaiting her hostess in the parlor.

The baroness came in a gown of plain black stuff, with linen collar and cap, looking like the most domestic of *chatelaines;* and they went together through kitchen, pantry, and wine-cellar, still-room, linen-room, laundry, dairy, kennel, and stable, returning by the garden and conservatory. Everywhere the servants were prepared for her coming, glad of her presence, proud of her praise; and madame examined the work of each, inquired for their friends at home, and was ready with advice and suggestion for all who asked it. The gardener followed her into the house with a huge tray of cut flowers; and Helen watched with delight as she arranged the vases with that instinctive taste which belongs to a sensitive and beauty-loving nature, making each a harmony of color and fragrance.

What to do with the coming day was the question of the breakfast-table. The baron proposed an excursion to the summit of the Reis.

"And what is the Reis?" asked Helen.

"It is a ridge of the Vosges," he answered, — "one of the highest; and it gives a view of all Lorraine, Alsace, the Rhine valley, and the Alps in the distance. Will you try it, Miss Dysart? We can ride to within half an hour of the top; but that half hour, I must warn you, will be a steep climb."

They were soon on the road, which followed the northern bank of the river nearly to Munster, and then turned northward up a little tributary of the Fecht. Between hillsides, strewn with great granite blocks broken from the jagged ridge above, through rock-walled ravines, clothed with dark spruce-trees, they issued on a little plateau beneath the gigantic precipice of the Reisberg, — a sheer rise of a thousand feet above their heads. Here they left the carriage and began a circuitous ascent on foot. Nearly an hour's sharp climbing brought them to the top and well repaid their trouble. Before them, on the west, lay the fair valleys of Lorraine, from St. Diey to Belfort. The infant Meurthe wound northward from the foot of the ridge on which they stood; and, like strips of fallen sky, lay the two blue lakes which are the source of the Moselle. Northward and eastward towered the line of the Vosges and the Haardt, with the valleys of the Ill and the Rhine, and beyond, the Black Forest of Baden. Southward the Rhine valley led the eye to Switzerland, and far on the horizon rose the white pyramids of the Eiger, Jungfrau, and the Altels Range; beneath them lay the rock-walled pools of Lac Blanc and Lac Noir; and, nestling in the meadows of the Weiss, the hamlet and spires of Orbey.

With the map spread out before them, they were able to locate many a town and river of name familiar in song and story. Here was Alsace, wrested from France by the war of 1870; and the baron repeated with a sigh the lines, —

"Alsatia, thou to whom in evil hour
The fatal boon of beauty Nature gave,
Oh, were that beauty less, or more thy power!
That he, who now compels thee to his arms,
Might gaze with cold indifference on thy charms,
Or tremble at thine eye's indignant lower."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE VEXED QUESTION.

WHEN Mrs. Dysart had finished her writing, she went down to the library, where she found the baroness engaged with her household accounts. Mrs. Dysart would not permit her to interrupt herself. "Pray leave me to myself, and let me glance over your books," she said.

"By all means," said the baroness. "Here on this side you will find the English shelves."

They were of a class with which Mrs. Dysart was not familiar. Many of them, she fancied, represented the late baron's peculiar opinions and studies in political and social philosophy, — Hobbes, Milton's prose works, Bolingbroke, Burnet, Clarendon, Neal, Hargrave, Hallam, Bentham, Adam Smith, Mill, and Froude.

"These are books which I don't know," she observed. "Is this a favorite kind of reading with you, Madame Waldeyer?"

"The baron used to read to me, and I to him; otherwise, I should probably know very little of books of this class. Living alone, as we did, books, and these not generally of a light kind, were our companions. You will find others beyond."

Mrs. Dysart continued her examination, to find English literature, ancient and modern, well represented in all departments. But the greater part of the library was French and German, of a character similar to the English portion. "I have always wondered," she said, "how you came to speak English so perfectly well."

"It was a common language with the baron and myself. He did not speak my native Spanish, and I was by no means fluent in French; so English was in habitual use with us, and was only gradually superseded by French and German. Both those languages, as you know, belong to Alsace; and most of the people use either indifferently, and both badly, as I must admit. Helen's French, I notice, is exceedingly good."

"I am glad you think so," said Mrs. Dysart. "She reads French and German with perfect ease, and with practice would, I dare say, speak well."

"That is fortunate," said the baroness, "if she is to have a home at Hohentauben. This estate belongs to the baron, you know; I belong to the estate at present; and I hope you are willing to allow that Helen belongs, in part at least, to me."

"You have told us so frequently, for the last month, madame," said Mrs. Dysart with a smile; "but to reverse your statement, we will say, Helen belongs to you, you belong to the estate, the estate belongs to the baron: that would make Helen belong to the baron,— a very different proposition, you perceive."

"And would *you* find it an objectionable one, madame?" said the baroness, with an interrogative smile.

"It is an idea which I could not, at any rate, entertain in advance of the parties themselves," replied Mrs. Dysart.

"Let us speak in confidence to each other," said Madame Waldemeyer. "I must not compromise the baron, of course; but I cannot help observing him, and it is plain to me that he is greatly fascinated by Helen. If he should presently tell her so, it would be no surprise to me, and if she answered according to his hopes it would be a very great delight. As his wife, she would be mistress of Hohentauben, as well as heiress of my separate estate; and she would be the unquestionable baroness, — a name to which my claim is not too good, if there were any to dispute it. Better than that, she would find the baron worthy of his name. Have you any idea how she would receive such a proposal?"

"Not the least. More than once already she has declined proposals which her father and I would gladly have had her accept. In fact, we have doubted if she would ever marry at all."

"I think he might win her whole heart in time," said the baroness. "Helen's vigorous and eager nature would be fitly mated with his. He is a man of affairs, as his brother was of speculation; but both are alike in the simplicity of their feelings and in their appreciation of domestic life. I know very well that he has never before cared for any woman who in any way could compare with Helen. Ten years ago he was betrothed to a daughter of General d'Ecuyer, — a sweet, frail creature, who died before he could marry her; and his heart has

been vacant since, until he met our Helen. I do not know the man to whom I would sooner give daughter of mine."

"Such is my own impression," said Mrs. Dysart. "You know how much I appreciated his care when he went with us from Martigny to Chamouny."

"Then you will not say him nay, if it comes to that, dear Mrs. Dysart?"

"I shall say neither one thing nor the other, if it comes to that; but I shall congratulate them both, with all my heart."

"Oh, thank you! You make me very happy. It is after three. Shall we go down to the pavilion and watch for their return? The baron said they would be at home by four. If they come by the river-road, we can see them a long way off."

But they watched in vain, for the excursionists had taken the road north of the ridge, by the castle of Hohnpach, and came rattling out of the ravine of the Vogelbach, directly beneath the pavilion, while the ladies were gazing in the other direction.

Dinner was served soon after their arrival, after which the younger members of the party returned to the pavilion. Walter and Eugene proposed a row upon the river, and Alice joined them. The baron and Helen sat watching the receding boat, whose oars flashed in the declining sunlight.

"This is my opportunity," thought the baron. "Do you find the sketch of this place, which the baroness gave you at Interlaken, correct?" he asked.

"More than correct," said Helen. "It is the scene, and it is her sense of the scene also, — the beauty of nature brightened by the illumination of her mind. I am seldom very much interested in a picture unless I can see the artist in his work; and I value this little sketch exceedingly, for long hence and far away it will recall the image of both place and person to me. The baroness told me at Chamouny that I could understand her only after I had seen her in her own home; and it was perfectly true, for here I see not only what she is, but how she has become what she is. I am very glad we came, even for a little while."

"Must it, then, be a *little* while, Miss Dysart? May I, for this evening and while we sit here, call you, as all others do, — Helen?"

She lifted her inquiring eyes to his as she answered, "I see no reason why you should not do so, if you like. We are connections, in a sort of way."

The baron looked so long at her in silence that she looked up archly. "Do you disclaim me, then, baron?"

"Disclaim you, Helen, — disclaim *you*, who, since that evening at Lucerne, have been first, and almost alone, in my waking thoughts, and even in my dreams! You do not know how beautiful and bright you are to me, — how there is not a feature or a motion of yours, never a turn of your face, a word of your lips, a glance of your eye, a ripple of your hair, a touch of your hand, that does not thrill me through and through. Why are you so lovely, Helen, if I may not love you? Why do I so long for your love, if you may not give it to me?

You can be the light, crown, reward of my life. You know it, and you will be, will you not? — for you cannot refuse love such as mine. God never made such sweetness for itself alone.

"Do not speak yet! Let me first say that if you will accept my devotion, you shall do as you please with me and mine. I risk nothing in saying this; for have I not watched you for weeks, and do I not know that you have never a thought nor a wish which is not sweet and generous, — that love and grace and honor rule your mind as beauty lives and breathes in your form? Day by day, for weeks past, these words have been in my throat, and I have strangled them till they have almost strangled me. I would not utter them until you had time to see and know something more of me and mine. I can keep silence no longer. My words do not say what they should. It would need years to do that, and years only can tell my meaning for me."

"Baron! Baron Waldeyer! Wait, do wait, and let me speak! I cannot have you open your heart to me thus without a word from me. If I hear, I assent. If I do not and cannot assent, I should not hear.

"You have been a most useful and most valuable friend to me and to all of us. No kindness could be more graceful or complete than yours has been. I have done very little to merit it; and when a man whom I so much esteem and admire tells me his love and asks for mine, I ought indeed to be flattered and pleased.

"I prize your friendship. Let us never be less than friends, whatever happens. But you are too kind, and

you have invested me with gifts and graces which do not belong to me, and which exist only in your own imagination. We dream of our mates, from childhood onward, and we dream of our feelings toward them; and then we fancy that we have found the likeness of our dreams in some one, and forthwith we invest that person with all we most desire to love. So it is now. You have made of me the surface on which the light of your own heart is thrown. It is the love of love, which you declare to be the love of me! Think of it in that way, and I shall not have to blush at the sense of your exaggeration."

"Now it is my turn, Helen; and I tell you it is not so. I swear it is not so! It is just you, — you, who are so soft and so hard, so ingenuous and so elusive and so fascinating all at once, that I want, and that I must have. This is no vague or general susceptibility. For ten years I have not felt even the most transient attraction; there has been no one to whose love I would not have preferred my liberty. But now, about your form, your soul, every wandering thought and affection has gathered, to flow no more, and not elsewhere. What would it be, if your beauty and your brightness could be the food of every day? I don't think you can imagine how I can and will love you, if only you will permit it. Drop that cool, critical manner, I implore you! Give me your hand! Let me hear you say that henceforth our lives are to be one! God knows, and I know, that your wishes will shape every wish of mine."

"Oh, what am I to do with such a man?" she cried, —

"a man who thinks himself so much in love with me, and is so fierce and masterful; who takes no account of my years and opportunities, and does not even seem to suspect that I may have kept some fancy by me from which I cannot be so suddenly weaned. If I never had been wooed before, I don't think I could say you nay, Baron. You are such an eloquent lover, you would be irresistible. But I have had my experiences, and have seen the most ardent love subside into silence and great contentment. There was Mr. So-and-So, who on one occasion assured me that his heart was broken; and now I go to the opera with him and his little wife, and nobody is surprised. He says I knew him better than he did himself. Gratitude toward me has replaced every other emotion with him. MacMahon may make you Minister to Persia, one of these days; and then I shall be only that American girl who bewitched your summer leisure in Switzerland and Alsace."

"You mock, you wound me, Helen! Do you not realize that you are, and must be, either my light or my eclipse forever?"

"No, and it is not so. A man who has your record and has lived your life, who has faculties and ambitions in him like yours, and such opportunity and promise before him, takes a disappointment, even if he finds it severe, and does not suffer it to unman him. No woman could bring to your bright life what you fancy I might bring. Years hence, when your record is made up, — patriot, soldier, senator, diplomat, — it will be of no consequence to history whether one woman or another was

of your household. The crown of history, the applause of senates, the gratitude of a nation will be yours, — your inspiration and your reward."

"Well, even supposing all this to be. You are a part — the best part — of me; and will not my success and honor be yours also, and worth your sharing? Could I enjoy them alone? Would there be anything half so sweet as to lay all at your feet, — to place it, as it were a crown, on the head of the beautiful woman whom I adore? Why do you put me off thus, Helen? You have faith in me, you say. Prove it. Tell me now that I may have you and hold you and keep you. Only say that to me, Helen!"

"I cannot say it, Baron; and I would gladly have prevented your saying this to me. Be content. Do not ask what I am not free to give."

"Not free, Helen, — not free? Do your love and your faith, then, belong to another?"

"My faith is my own, — I am not pledged to any one, but still I am not free; though, if I could have prevented it, I would not have allowed you to force me to tell you so. I wish neither to give you pain in refusing your addresses nor pain to any one else in permitting them. And now, my dear Baron, whatever there is between you and me, as I would not parade a love which I cannot accept, even so I will not be questioned by you about any other person. Proud and grateful as I am for your interest in me, we must be to each other as we always have been until this evening, before you were betrayed into these hasty and passionate words."

"It cannot be, Helen. I cannot see you sit or move, I cannot think of you waking or asleep, near or absent, and be content with the distance which you place between us."

"Please, *please*, say no more, Baron Waldeyer! Only before we leave the subject, I must tell you this, — that I *will* cure you of this hapless love, and I *will* have you and keep you for one of my first and best friends. I have plenty of use for your friendship in other ways than that of making myself a permanent burden and charge upon you. No more now, I pray you; and you must not feel aggrieved, and you must not enlist the baroness for you or against me."

"There is but one word of comfort in what you say, Miss Dysart: it is the word 'now.' It permits me to speak again to you; and it cannot be that you will always be so cold and so hard to reach."

"Here come the young people," was all Helen's answer. "Now let us set them a decorous example, Baron."

"Why," cried Alice, "have you been here all this immense time?" and she glanced quickly from one to the other.

"We have waited, as you see," said the baron. "Mrs. Dysart would have been disturbed had we returned without you. How far did you row?"

"To the other end of the lake," said Walter, — "a mile or more."

The sun was gone down, and the glow in the west had faded. The moon, with down-dropped horns, was risen

in the east, and the twinkling waters and dim shores lay fair and still in its pale ray. A month before, from the other verge of the sky, it had kept morning watch with them on the Rigi. Six hours later it would pierce the storm-cloud of Colorado to light a scene of death and deliverance.

"What a dew!" said Alice, looking at her pretty feet. "We must all go in."

The baroness and Mrs. Dysart met them on the porch over the moat.

"You have been in the grass, children, and your shoes are wet. Go and take care of yourselves. I have sent letters and a package to your room, Mr. Audran. By the postmarks, I should think they had travelled from one end of Switzerland to the other before finding you."

"If you will excuse me, mother, and you, mamma, I will not come down again to-night," said Helen. "I am tired after that scramble on the Reisberg."

"And me too, please," said Alice. "It is too late to dress again."

"Good-night, then, all of you, if such is your pleasure," said the baroness. "Mrs. Dysart and I get on beautifully without you."

So they went, each their own way.

A few minutes later, Helen heard Walter's voice at her door.

"Miss Dysart, may I speak with you for a moment?"

She opened her door, and he showed her two letters which bore the postmarks of Lucerne, Interlaken, Geneva, and the stamp of the consulate at the latter city.

"You know," said he, "how I have wondered at having no letters from Robert. It appears that he wrote both from Liverpool and New York; and his letters, probably from some carelessness of mine, have been travelling round Switzerland until they reached the consul at Geneva, and were sent on here by him, with this little box. Each of Robert's letters encloses one for you, and this box has your name on the inside wrapper. I want to take all the blame of the delay on my own shoulders, where it belongs, and hope you will forgive me for it."

"Yes, my dear boy, I will charge you with it, and discharge you at the same time. I am very glad to get the letters at last, and they come in good time. Thank you, and good-night!"

She opened the first enclosure. It was dated at Liverpool, July 12, and read as follows: —

My dear Miss Dysart, — Here, on the margin of the ocean which must so soon divide us, I claim for the first time the privilege which you permitted me.

I have thought of little else excepting you since we parted at the foot of the stairs, at Interlaken, and with each thought you have seemed nearer, dearer, and more necessary to me.

I have gone over your words again and again, to see just how much hope I might extract from them, and I trust you will allow me to recall some of them to you, for they are the anchors of my soul, and I must not let them pass from your memory or mine.

You said — and God be praised that you said so! — that you liked me better than you did any other man; and when I offered you all that there was in me or of me or with me, you said — splendid creature that you are, you *did* say! — that you liked me better than you ever did before.

O Helen, if only I can keep that mind in you!

I am going into exile. May I take with me the infinite hope which you have put into me? You bade me go to work out the scheme to which, for a time, — it may not be so very long, — my honor and my fortunes are committed; and you told me I might come again and be sure of your welcome.

Don't doubt that I shall come, and seek again the consent which you deferred, but did not altogether deny. And do not think I am trying to bind my queen in her own words. I have quoted them as an inspiration to myself, not as an obligation to you. I know that only the abiding approval of your judgment will insure your consent. But from my own point of view I do not despair of that, if I may not, as I will not, doubt your words. With many wishes for your present pleasure, and many hopes for the future,

I remain very truly yours,

ROBERT AUDRAN.

With nervous fingers Helen tore open the second letter. It bore date, Hoffman House, July 24.

MY DEAR MISS DYSART, — Helen, bien aimée, — Over three thousand miles of cold and faithless sea,

may I control your attention for a few moments? How much I envy my written words, which will look up into your eyes as you look down on them! How much I envy this paper, which you, perhaps, will lay by with sweet and fragrant things in your drawer, and perhaps, after a little, take and turn and read again! What sweet and blessed fortune led me to you on that summer afternoon, and followed me for those after days made ever bright and memorable by your society!

There are ranks upon ranks of beautiful and good women in the world, doubtless; but nowhere, I think, is one who could please me as you did, and always will do, — you, who have as much sense as if you had no wit, and as much wit as if you had no sense. It was said of some lady that a familiar acquaintance with her was equivalent to a liberal education; and it is certain that you and the memory of you tease me out of more thought than the best book that ever was written. Into the low-hung sky of my life you came, as after winter, spring, —

> "Spring, shedding soft dews from her ethereal wings;
> Flowers on the mountain, fruits over the plain,
> And music on the waves and woods she flings,
> And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things."

That is what you are to me while you give me leave to think of you. Your presence in my mind makes all good and gentle thoughts abide there, and all lower instincts fade and flee.

I have to tell you of a favorable voyage; of business, successful up to the present stage, and very promising,

as I think. You will hear, from your father and sister, of last night's adventure. The miscreant got away with the booty for which he came, but your father and I start in pursuit to-night; and as his mine is near my home, where I hope I have some influence, we look with confidence to recover the stolen property.

Helen, I am going five days' journey into the wilderness, — five days for me to go, and five more for a letter to return. For ten days after the coming of this, I cannot, or my words cannot, plead my cause with you, — the cause of one whom those who live in the centres of the world would call an exile, if not an outcast. It may be — often I fear it is — unlikely that I and mine can at all weigh with the manifold attractions which bind you to those more fortunate friends and to your present sphere.

Somebody says that the immortality of the soul is something almost too good to be believed, but the aspiration after it is as deathless as the soul itself. If you should close the door to all possible hope of possession, if even you should give your life and your love to another, I should still thank God that I have known you, and I should come eagerly and confidently, when I might, into your presence. But, until the irrevocable word is spoken, — until you bid me put you out of all my thoughts, — I shall dream of you as mine, and I shall shape life and fortune as I may to win and welcome you.

I must tell you how interesting I find your sister. She has much of your grace and fire. I cannot yet say

if she has your sweetness or your scope. Your father and she have been as kind to me as could possibly be.

You will sometime receive from Paris the stone which you bade me pick up for you from the rock on Rigi. It will come to you in the form of a button, — so you cannot say I do not care a button for you ; and the form is an act of conscience, — confession of a larceny. On the ground where you lay faint and pale at Handeck, I found a stud of yours, and I coveted the chance of replacing it with something which should recall myself.

I have kept it ever since, and shall keep so long as you permit; and if this which I send may take its place, no one but myself will know it, and I shall be both happy and unenvied. Ever truly yours,

ROBERT AUDRAN.

Then she opened the box, and there, in its bed of silk, lay an oval disk of blackest agate ; on its face, in letters of purest white and in high relief, was the word "Rigi." She breathed quickly, and a tear ran down her cheek as she looked, and said, "'Helen, bien aimée' —Helen, well-beloved. O Robert, my two mothers, father, brother, sister, baron! — have I love enough for all of you?"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PASSING CLOUD.

HELEN went early to Mrs. Dysart's room on the following morning; for she wished her to know that Mr. Audran, upon whose silence she had commented so severely of late, was neither remiss nor forgetful. She found her already dressed, and sitting by the open window.

"I did not think you would be up so early, mother," she said.

"Sleep is so restful here," answered Mrs. Dysart, "and the birds waken me early. I have been watching the humming-birds in the jessamine. There are two now."

"You are feeling well, then, this morning, mamma?"

"Yes, very well. And you, — did you take cold last night on the water?"

"I was not on the water; Alice and the boys went, but not I."

"And where were you?"

"In the pavilion by the river."

"Was the baron with you?"

"Yes, mother."

"Indeed! Then you probably had a very interesting interview."

Helen made no reply, and Mrs. Dysart continued, "I know what was in his mind, for the baroness has told me. Did he explain himself, Helen?"

"I suppose so."

"Well, tell me all about it."

"I received two letters from Mr. Audran last night, mamma, — one written just before sailing, and the other just after reaching New York. I had rather tell you of those."

"Oh, I can wait to hear about those. The baron interests me more at present."

"Mr. Audran is the older friend."

"About twenty-four hours, I think, Helen. Certainly he is older in years."

"You had a great regard for his mother, had you not?" asked Helen.

"Oh, yes, but she is dead and gone long ago. It is of your mother, and not his, that you should be thinking now. I know what the baron said to you, Helen. What I want to know is, how he said it, and what you answered."

"It will be time to go down to the baroness presently, mamma. We could not discuss this matter if we began it."

"Now, Helen, no nonsense! Of course it must all be told to me, sooner or later. Don't be so absurd and reserved!"

"But, mother, it is not nice for me to come straight and retail, even to you, what a gentleman intended for me, and me alone."

She rose to leave the room, and Mrs. Dysart, who was full of curiosity, thought sportively to detain her by slipping between her and the door. She sprang quickly from her seat, and ran across the room. "You shall not go, you provoking creature!" she cried; and even as the words died on her lips, she threw up her arms, tottered, fell against the wall, and then, with a low, gurgling cry, sank upon the floor.

Terribly alarmed, Helen sprang to raise her. Her face was livid, her eyes crossed, her limbs powerless, but there seemed to be some consciousness. Helen flung open the door, and screamed for help. Alice was there in an instant; together they lifted Mrs. Dysart and bore her to the sofa, sprinkled water in her face, and opened her dress at the throat and waist.

"Speak, mother, oh, speak!" cried Helen in an agony.

A movement of intelligence passed across the distorted face, the lips seemed to struggle in speech, and a vague tone but no words issued from them.

The baroness, in the hall below, heard the call, and came quickly.

"Has she fainted, Helen?"

"Oh, I don't know! I don't know what it is," she sobbed. "We must have the doctor at once."

"It is not a faint," pronounced the baroness, after a pause. "See, her color is better, and her breathing almost natural. She is paralyzed. Let me call the baron."

In another moment the baron entered. He studied the half-unconscious woman for a while, and then said

gravely, "It is something very serious, I fear, — apoplexy or paralysis, I cannot tell which."

"Go, Adolphe, send a messenger for Dr. d'Anvers, describe the case in a line, — go!"

The baron rang, a servant entered. "Tell Jean Oinie to saddle my black horse and come to the library."

He ran down stairs and wrote: —

A M. LE DOCTEUR D'ANVERS, Colmar: — A lady, guest of our house, is stricken with unconsciousness; her right side is powerless. Come yourself at once, with any other doctor you may choose to consult with, and telegraph to Paris for the best man in such cases.

ADOLPHE DE WALDEYER.

Then he returned to Mrs. Dysart's chamber, and found them preparing to move her to her bed.

"Do not move her," he said, "until the doctor comes. If it should prove apoplexy, and blood is pouring into her brain, the mischief will be increased by every motion."

So they stood, helplessly watching the dying life or the living death.

After a time the baron whispered, "I do not know, of course, but it seems to me that if it were apoplexy, by this time there would be increased pallor and a weaker pulse. It strikes me as more like a paralytic shock. Of those, you know, the first stroke is seldom fatal, and there may be many years of interval."

"Shall we try to give her some restorative, — eau de vie, perhaps?" said the baroness.

"I think not," he answered. "Her face is paralyzed; perhaps her throat may be also, and in that case it might strangle her. The doctor will be here in an hour and a half. Nothing should be done, in my opinion, until he comes."

The hour and a half seemed interminable, but at length the doctor arrived. He made deliberate examination of many details, questioned Helen minutely, weighed and pondered, so that insensibly all felt that when he spoke it would be with the weight of conviction. His final question, "Was she ever seriously ill with rheumatism, in the course of which her physicians were anxious about the state of her heart?" was answered by Helen in the affirmative.

He placed his ear upon Mrs. Dysart's chest, and, raising his head, pronounced, "This is not apoplexy; it is embolism. A little growth upon one of the heart-valves has been detached by a sudden effort, and has been swept along into one of the vessels of the brain, as far as it might go; there it rests, cutting off the blood-supply of that part of the brain, and so causing loss of power on one side of the body."

An hour later his colleague, Dr. Jardin, arrived, and, going through the same inquiries, pronounced the same verdict.

The baroness anxiously asked for the probable issue of the case, and was told that consciousness and motion would return slowly, in the course of the next forty-eight hours, and might thereafter improve. Loss of speech would continue for an indefinite period, during

which a favorable or an unfavorable course might be developed. More could not be stated with any certainty. Anxiety was inevitable, the doctor conceded, but there were good grounds for hope. It would be no surprising thing if the lady recovered so far as to enjoy comfortable health for many years. No, there was no special reason to anticipate any recurrence of the seizure at present. In accordance with Baron Waldeyer's request, Dr. d'Anvers had telegraphed to Dr. Charcot in Paris, but as yet had received no answer.

"Is there nothing that we can do for her now?" said the baroness.

"Absolutely nothing but to wait. I will call to-morrow and observe progress."

The baroness followed the doctors down stairs. "Gentlemen," she said, "I cannot explain how important it is to us, and particularly to me, to know exactly what we have to expect. Family matters of great concern must be arranged during the lifetime of your patient. Will she live a week?" She looked intently at Dr. d'Anvers, who bowed to his colleague and devolved the responsibility of reply upon him.

"We have told you already, madame, that we hope the lady's life may continue for years. An unfavorable issue will hardly take place in a week. It is possible, not probable."

"Then, may I ask you to carry a line from me to Father Ladine?" said the baroness. "And, for my sake as well as for her own, let me urge upon you the most exact and unremitting attention to my friend. In

my house, of all places in the world, she must lack for nothing which care can suggest or money provide." She wrote a hasty line, and delivered it to them.

Late in the afternoon Father Ladine arrived, and was closeted with the baroness for an hour. When he left, he took with him a packet of papers, and an order on her bankers for ten thousand francs.

Helen meantime had sent the following telegram to New York, to be forwarded to her father: —

"Mother has been stricken with paralysis. Recovery will be slow, perhaps uncertain. Physicians call it cerebral embolism. Can you and Julia come? Answer.

"H. D."

The following morning the physicians from Colmar, with their distinguished Parisian *confrère*, carefully examined the patient, but could add nothing to the report of the previous day. All was quite as well as could be expected.

On the evening of the second day after the attack Helen received the following despatch: —

FOUNTAIN, COL., Aug. 11.

Have telegraphed Julia to take to-morrow's steamer. Send some one to meet her. Shall follow as soon as possible. A. D.

A few hours later Julia telegraphed that she would sail by the Hamburg steamer of the 13th, landing at Cherbourg.

"This is the 13th," said Helen to Alice. "If they have a ten days' passage, she can be at Cherbourg on the 23d. It is a five days' journey from Colorado to New York, — Mr. Audran told me so. Father cannot sail before the 16th or 17th, or be here before the 29th. Oh, how will things be then, and how can we meet him if mother should die?"

At his third visit Dr. d'Anvers comforted them by pronouncing Mrs. Dysart fairly conscious, and assuring them that a return of speech might be soon anticipated. "It will come gradually," he said. "At present her ideas are hazy, and she has lost the association between words and thoughts. We call it aphasia."

Helen never left her mother, except when the baroness or Alice could persuade her to go out into the court or corridor for a few moments of fresh air. All the ladies were absorbed in the sick-room; and the baron, Walter, and Eugene employed the melancholy days as best they might.

On the fourth day Mrs. Dysart spoke for the first time, feebly and indistinctly, — "Helen, where am I?"

"Here in your own bed, mother dear."

"What is the matter with my limbs, — this one, this side? I can't move it."

"They are weak, mother. By and by you will be able to move."

"What is it, Helen?"

"Some kind of a shock, mother. You fell the other day, and you have been very drowsy since, that 's all."

"Whose house is this?"

"Madame Waldeyer's."

"Oh, yes, I remember. What a trouble to her!"

"It won't be, mother, if you will only get well."

"Does your father know, Helen?"

"Yes; Julia will be here in a week, and papa in two."

"Oh, that 's good. What makes my head so strange?"

"Don't think and don't talk so much, dear mother."

"Where 's my boy? Where 's Eugene?"

"Close by. I will call him, mother."

Eugene came, and his mother kissed him, and said, "Don't be worried, dear Eugene. I shall get well. Now let me see the baroness."

The baroness came, bent over the bed and kissed Mrs. Dysart.

"I am a sore trouble to you, Baroness."

"You are my treasure, dear madame. God send that I may keep you until I can give you back well to your friends!"

"My husband?"

"He will come to his wife. Your daughter will come to her mother. I shall be so proud and happy to see you all together, and to be permitted to serve you."

"Is he your husband, too?"

"He is not, — he never could be. Only yours, — yours always."

"You will not trouble him?"

"I will never trouble him, and I will always love you. Now be still, dear friend, and rest."

"You will always be good to Helen?"

"As good as she will allow me to be," said the baroness, drawing Helen toward her.

"Very well, I will sleep, then," murmured Mrs. Dysart; and she dropped off into partial unconsciousness again.

From that time there was steady improvement, and the apprehensions of the watchers gradually subsided. The common interest of their mutual employment, and their constant and intimate association, made Helen and the baroness perfectly at ease with each other before the week was over. Only with reference to her relations to Mr. Audran there was a reserve which Madame Waldeyer did not dare assail.

Thus the days passed until the 20th, and Julia was due at Cherbourg on the 23d. Mr. Dysart had requested that some one should be sent to meet her there. Helen proposed Eugene.

"But pray let the baron accompany him," said Madame Waldeyer. "We were speaking of it last night, and he begged me to say that he should feel very much honored by being allowed to share in the charge of your sister."

"How very good he is!" said Helen. "It is like his giving up the trip across the mountains to escort mamma to Geneva. There is no interruption and no end to the goodness of both of you. You have brought all sorts of trouble on yourselves by it."

"And I have gained all I wished by means of it," said the baroness. "Except for Mrs. Dysart's illness, your

visit would be the best and greatest pleasure which I could have had; and since, as we hope, this illness is now passing away, even that, by bringing Mr. Dysart here, will hasten the solution of our relations to each other, — relations which, so long as they remain unadjusted, are a trouble to us all."

The baroness spoke with an easy confidence which Helen and Mrs. Dysart could not share and did not understand. To them it seemed that this meeting, at best, must be an awkward one, and might easily be hazardous. But there was something so serene and so affectionate in the baroness's manner, that they could not doubt that she saw her way out of all difficulties, and that, like her other ways, it would prove graceful and kind.

Mrs. Dysart, however, was troubled. She looked long at the baroness, and burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Mrs. Dysart!" said Madame Waldeyer. "Oh, pray don't! It is so bad for you."

"How can I help it, Madame Waldeyer? How can I forget that my husband, who has been all my own, comes to find me helpless, half-dead, bewildered, weak, — a burden to him and to every one, and comes to compare me with you, his first love, still so fresh and so fair? If you have won all our hearts and taken possession of our lives, what will it be with him? If the law says that you are still his wife, that you still belong to him and he belongs to you, — if life belongs to life and abhors death, — what am I, and what is to become of me?"

The baroness smiled through tears as she answered, "I don't think I ought to talk with you at all about this now. It was very wrong in me to allow your mind to turn to these matters. You are still too weak and confused to know clearly what you do think, and these are very sick fancies of yours. But still I must just remind you that women of our age belong to the past and not to the future. It is for what we have been, and not for what we are or may be, that we are prized, after fifty.

"I am a proud woman, I believe; still, all I demand of Mr. Dysart now is his charity. I was a dreadful trial to him for one year of his life; and when, by no fault of his, the tie of our unnatural relation loosened, I am sure that, for all his sorrow, there must have been an immense relief. Nor am I less sure that in the wife whom he chose from all others because she suited him, he has found and still finds all that he failed to find in me.

"When I spoke of relations to be adjusted, I thought only of the peace and security which such adjustment would bring to you, not of myself.

"There is a great deal more to be said about this, but we will leave it now. Meanwhile, let us settle about your daughter's arrival. I am so anxious to see her! Perhaps, if she turns out another Helen, I shall want to claim her too. It is for your children, Mrs. Dysart, that I envy you. Has Miss Julia ever been in Europe?"

"No," said Helen. "It will all be new to her, new and very strange, landing alone, perhaps in the middle

of the night. I believe those German steamers stop only an hour or so at Cherbourg to deliver mails and passengers."

"For that very reason the baron must surely go for her," said Madame Waldeyer, "and they must start to-morrow."

"Since you and he propose it," said Helen, "it will really be a great comfort to have him accompany Eugene. I shall be glad to have him see my sister. They will like each other, I am sure."

"Is she so much like you, then?" asked the baroness, with a curious smile.

"She is much younger than I, and full of life, very impulsive and entertaining. She is not *blasée* or conventional in the least. The baron will like her, I know. I will run down to thank him, if you can spare me a few minutes."

"Yes, go down, all of you," said Mrs. Dysart. "Marie will stay with me while you are at dinner. Then send Eugene up, and you two girls stay and make a pleasant evening for the gentlemen."

After much discussion of the proposed journey, Helen asked, "Can I telegraph Julia at Plymouth?"

"Certainly," said the baron, "if you do so at once."

Helen wrote: —

"Mother doing well; anxious to see you. Baron W. and Eugene meet you at Cherbourg."

"And I am so glad you will," said she, turning to the baron with her loveliest smile. "Queen Jule, you know, Eugene. It suits her to be attended by lords

and marshals. She will believe all I have written her about our friends here."

After dinner Eugene and the baroness went to Mrs. Dysart, Walter led Alice away for a walk by the river, and Helen and the baron were left in the *salon*.

The baron wanted the opportunity to speak without interruption, so he beguiled her first to the porch, and then to the pavilion; and Helen went, knowing full well what was to come, and studying with herself how she might dismiss a lover without recourse or appeal, and yet retain a friend whose interest and confidence she was anxious to preserve.

The baron was not long in beginning. "You must know, Miss Dysart, how tedious have been these days, in which I have barely been able to get sight, and rarely speech, of you. You must feel that I cannot rest content with the issue of our last conversation, or wait much longer before renewing it. This was inevitable; and yet you come willingly to this spot, where once you saw what was deepest and strongest in my heart."

"More than willingly, Baron. I value your interest and esteem too highly to vex you with any delay or uncertainty; and now I want to know what I can do to cure you of any warmer feeling."

"There is no cure for love but more love, Helen."

"Indeed there is, and you shall find it. There are two good reasons why you must not ask for more than the friendship which now exists between us. Either of them is sufficient; at any rate, they must control me. The first is, that I could not listen to you without being

false to another; and the second, that I do not believe, I could ever feel for you what I feel for him, or give you the response which your love deserves and will command from some one better suited to you than I.

"You see I am trying to make my words as plain as I can. I am thus frank with you, because I want you to believe me, and to be sure that I know my own mind in this matter; and now if you will only believe my words to be equally sincere, — those in which I implore your friendship, and those in which I refuse any other sentiment you can proffer me."

The baron had covered his face with both his hands as Helen spoke, and when she ceased he did not at once remove them. At length he said bitterly, "There is no hope for me then, Helen, — nothing but a disappointment deeper than you can measure. What am I to do with this forbidden love of mine? O Helen, what might — what might not — you do for me!"

"Perhaps I see farther than you do. If I were going forever out and away from your sphere, never to meet you again, I should grieve to lose whatever influence I have with you. But that will not be. Whichever way it comes about, there must always be close relations between the baroness and myself. I know her now for my mother, and she is wonderful and admirable to me. One cannot condemn her past life without condemning that which is also her greatest charm, — her endless and immeasurable devotion to those whom she loves. You and I — and your wife, when you have one — are to share and return this love, and with her and

with each other our lives are to be bound. We two should be as brother and sister. Think of me as such, and all that a sister may give to a brother, all that a sister may seek from a brother, shall pass and pass again between us.

"It was with this thought that I tried to stop your words the other day, and that I came so readily to talk with you now. Do you understand it?"

"What a woman you are, Helen, — tender and remorseless, sweet and bitter, in a breath! You will not love, nor let any one else love, except just as you think best. What sort of a man must this favored lover, Major Audran, be?"

"Fie, Baron! You should not use that or any other name in such connection until I give you leave. But do not think I have any apologies to make for him. We are not pledged to each other in words, and it may be that there will be nothing between us in future; but because of what has been and what is, I will let no other man call himself my lover at present. We must not talk about this any more. I want to tell you about Julia. She is a royal girl, — magnanimous, full of enthusiasm and prejudice, brilliant and shy and sincere. You must not imagine that any one mood which you happen to note is the whole of her. If you should suppose yourself to have taken her measure and to have found her limit, she will be apt to astonish you. But of one thing you may be sure: her words proceed straight from her heart, and are not kept and dressed for occasion. She is coming over now under a great

cloud of anxiety, but I hope she will find a telegram from me when she reaches Plymouth, so that her mind will be relieved, and you may see something of her bright usual self.

"Now let us go back to the house, or they will think you are making love to me, which would be a great mistake. You never will do so again, will you?"

CHAPTER XX.

ENTER JULIA.

THE baron and Eugene started early on the following morning. Alice and Walter accompanied them as far as Colmar, and brought back the letters from the post-office. There was one, with the Roman post-mark, for the baroness, and one, with the stamp of Monroe & Co., Paris, for Helen.

Both ladies seemed in very good spirits that afternoon. The baroness was also pleased with the arrival of a high-backed chair, fitted with rings and poles, which came from Paris, and said to Mrs. Dysart, "You must begin to use this now, so that when Mr. Dysart comes you can be carried all about the house and grounds with him. Further travel I forbid, for a long time to come."

Helen's letter was written the day after Mr. Audran's arrival at Fountain. He made no mention of the Dunphy adventure, beyond saying that Mr. Dysart had recovered his papers, but wrote with spirit and hopefulness of his own affairs, as well as of the memories and hopes of which she was the central figure.

That same evening, at the agency of the steamships in Paris, the baron learned that the "Frisia" would

hardly reach Plymouth in less than ten days from New York, and Cherbourg some twelve hours later. There was no need, therefore, to hasten from Paris; so in the morning he called at the Elysée, and, after a long conference with President McMahon, accepted a proposition which had been made to him some months before, and was now renewed with urgency, to go to the United States, in nominal connection with the French embassy at Washington, but with a commission to investigate military affairs. He was to go when convenient, to reside where he might choose, and to remain as long as occasion should require.

Early in the morning of the second day the "Frisia" was reported off Penzance; would be due in Plymouth at eleven o'clock, would sail again at three, and probably reach Cherbourg at midnight. Eugene and the baron therefore took the train at noon, reached Cherbourg in the evening, and at midnight were on board the little tender which ran outside the breakwater to await the coming of the steamer.

Overhead the stars were shining in the deep blue of a cloudless night, but a veil of fog lay upon the dark water, and hid the sleeping town. Here and there a nebulous point of light showed, where some vessel lay at anchor, completely shrouded in darkness and mist. Against the incoming tide the little tug ran stiffly out half a mile or more, and lay to with just movement enough to stem the current. Half an hour in chilly expectation they stood, with faces turned seaward; then a yellow, a green, a red light shone through the cur-

tain of the damp, and in a moment more the vast black hull of the steamship rose right above them. In another moment the tug lay alongside. A port was opened below, a gang-plank shot out, and a file of sailors, each with a mail-sack on his shoulders, trotted out and back. Next, a section of the bulwark above was removed, a movable stairway lowered, one gold-embroidered officer at the top held a lantern high, while another led by the hand the solitary passenger who desired to land at Cherbourg. Step by step, in the beam of light, the slender, gray-cloaked figure descended.

"Here we are, Julia!" cried Eugene; and as she touched the deck he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"How is mother?" were her first words, and "Getting well fast," the encouraging answer.

"And Helen? and Alice?"

"Very well also,—all are well. Now, Jule, this is Baron Waldeyer, come with me to meet you."

The baron delivered, with the precision of a soldier, his most profound and conventional bow; and Julia mentally ejaculated, "Heavens! how stiff!"

"I hope mademoiselle has not suffered from her voyage," he remarked courteously.

"Thanks; not in the least. I was not sick at all, but so impatient to get here. Where are we? Where is Cherbourg?"

"Scarcely half a mile, in that direction," said the baron, pointing to the bow of the boat, now moving rapidly southward.

"And what are we to do when we get there? How soon can we leave for Colmar?"

"At nine o'clock in the morning," said the baron. "This must have been a disturbed night to you, Miss Dysart. You will need sleep, I should think."

"Yes, if only one could sleep at will," — looking at her watch. "It is nearly four now, and it would seem absurd to go to bed at daybreak in a strange hotel. I suspect I have the advantage of you, gentlemen. We left Plymouth at three, and I slept from eight until I was called at one. When did you arrive in Cherbourg?"

"About nine, and we also had three or four hours of sleep. I am afraid you will find the delay a long and dull one if you cannot sleep."

"Oh, no," said Julia; "I shall have my trunks to look over, and my letters. Have you not brought me letters, Eugene?"

"Positively, I had forgotten them," said the boy. "Here they are, — one from Helen and one from Alice."

"And I bring one also from my sister," added the baron. "It conveys, I presume, the welcome which I am sure she feels, and has charged me to express for her in all ways which are possible. I think, however, that Miss Dysart carries her welcome with her wherever she goes; and I am sure there is no house anywhere which would not be honored by receiving Miss Helen Dysart's sister."

"You are very good," said Julia, "and both of us

ought to be exceedingly obliged to you. Dear Helen! it is not the first time that she has won place and consideration for us all."

The boat had now reached the quay, and they drove through the dark streets to the hotel, where a sleepy *concierge* received them, and conducted Julia to her chamber. She drew a chair to the window, threw open the closed shutters, and sat down to watch the tree-tops swaying in the night-wind and the gray dawn creeping over the eastern sky. "How very kind in the baron to come all this way for me!" she thought. "He adores Helen, evidently, and they mean to make it impossible for us to refuse her to them. I must see what the baroness has to say. It seems to me I should have found it difficult to write at all had I been in her position."

She opened the letter, and in the growing daylight read: —

HOHENTAUBEN, August 20.

MY DEAR MISS DYSART, — Your brother and Baron Waldeyer will at once relieve your mind of anxiety about your mother. Of her I need only say that she has been the most charming of invalids, and her rapid recovery, which is now almost complete, has relieved us from a great fear and sorrow.

The baron will also, for himself and for me, bid you welcome to Hohentauben. It is to be our great pleasure to receive your entire family, and it is my hope to win from you all consent as to my future relations to

Helen. Beautiful and lovely as she is, the unceasing object of my dreams and hopes through all the years when she did not know of my existence, she has become now so dear and necessary to me that I cannot bear to lose sight of her. If it is right for me to devote the remainder of my life to her service, can it be wrong for you to allow me to do so?

Will you deny me the opportunity to make such atonement for the past as I may? Providence has favored me with this unexpected opportunity of pleading my cause at once and before you all. If I cannot succeed now, I can never hope to do so. Dear Miss Julia, you won't prevent it, will you? You will not recall whatever I may have won from Helen and your mother?

It is right, because it is necessary, that I, an old woman, should sue to you, a young one, — and yet I am not wont to sue. I hope, and I shall not cease to hope, that I may yet owe no less to your confidence than to your kindness.

But I will not write further of that of which I can so much better speak; so I will only say that though, in the security of a lifetime of love, you must know how glad your mother and Helen will be to see you again, you cannot possibly realize how much I too await your coming, as a great pleasure and a great boon. Helen's sister is secure of love and honor and welcome at Hohentauben whenever she may come.

Yours sincerely,

MANUELA DE WALDEYER.

Julia read and re-read this letter to find both what it declared and what it concealed, and came to the conclusion that it concealed nothing, and was indeed the frank utterance of a proud and affectionate woman. "She means to make us admit that she did no wrong, or that, because she has perhaps lived a decent life and cultivated her own moral nature, she has not outraged ours," she said to herself. "But that is a great deal for us to admit. On the other hand, one cannot think worse of her for attempting it: there is nothing ignoble, there seems to be everything worthy, in her purpose and her methods. They are natural to her, and generous to us. Putting aside all interested and selfish considerations, what should we gain by wounding and defying her? Should we go away with a better opinion of ourselves? Would it be a pleasant memory to cherish, — that we had kept ourselves aloof, and bidden her to grow old and die childless and forlorn? Is there any doubt that, except for one brief passage in her life, she has been more guileless and more high-minded, more free from envy and malice and all uncharitableness, than many, — than most women?

"Father will be here in three days. It is for him to determine what our attitude shall be. I should only compromise him in one way or another by any expression which the baroness might draw from me in advance. I will wait, and go on with him. I can telegraph him at Queenstown to join us in Paris; and I will dismiss the baron, if he desires to go. Eugene and I can surely take care of ourselves for three days. Now I must let them know."

She unpacked her portfolio, and wrote first to Helen: —

DEAR NELL, — Eugene has so fully assured me about mamma that I think I shall wait until I can invade your new abode under the protection of my father. I am afraid of compromising some one by an interview with the baroness, who has written me an adroit and effective letter.

The voyage was comfortable, and I am very well, and very much pleased and flattered by the politeness of the baron. Please thank the baroness in my name for her very graceful welcome. I shall telegraph to papa as soon as I know at what hotel in Paris we are to stay.

Just now, between midnight and daybreak, I find myself set down in some sort of a place in Cherbourg. I can't see much, so far, but it seems well enough; though the shapes of the forts and towers in this gray dawn, and the trees tossing in the morning wind over a strange land and sea, are somewhat eerie and dreary.

Give my love to mother and Alice. Three days more will bring me to them and you.

Yours affectionately,

JULIA.

The sun was rising over the headland of Cape Levi, and the rocks and woods of Cotentin lay dewy and deep in shadow, when Eugene knocked at the door. She admitted him, and the boy said, "The baron and I have been trying to sleep, but it was no go. How has it been with you?"

"I have been writing, Eugene. I think I will not go beyond Paris until papa comes."

"Very well. Two or three days in that lively little town won't be bad, considering that it is your first visit. I rather like Paris myself."

"And," added Julia, "I want to telegraph to father at what hotel to look for us, and I don't want to detain Baron Waldeyer. I shall tell him so this morning. He won't think it rude, will he?"

"That depends," answered Eugene, "on how and why you do it. Baron Waldeyer is not a man likely to fail in understanding the meaning of such an act. He is awfully soft on Helen, did you know it?"

"But if Helen is 'soft,' as you say, on Mr. Audran, I should not think she would encourage the baron. I wonder that the baron did n't fancy Alice instead."

"It would n't have worked, if he had. She 's provided for. She just angled — gently, you know — for Walter Audran, and he rose; and now she 's gone, hook and line, bob and sinker."

"Is it so bad as that?" said Julia.

"There 's nothing bad about it," said Eugene. "Walter 's a trump; he 'll be a tip-top lawyer, one of these days."

"Is Alice fond of him too?"

"What do you mean, Jule? Does she go mooning about, tearful and *distraite*, when he is gone, and twisting and clinging when he is near? Not much! She and Helen air their affections in lofty style, I can assure you, when they air them at all."

"Is n't it a part of the baroness's plan to make a match between Helen and the baron? I should think it would naturally be."

"She 's no match-maker, Julia: there 's nothing underhand about the baroness. She 's grand, I tell you."

"How can a woman who has done as she has done be grand?"

"She is grand because she is so impulsive and affectionate and sincere. Whenever she has loved, it has been with her whole heart and soul; and it was necessary to her happiness that she should be paid in kind. She *would* have devotion, and the governor could n't or would n't give it, and so she left him; and I cannot blame her so much. A man has no business to scant or scrimp such a woman."

"Eugene, you are shocking, — positively shocking! Had she any right to forget her vows and his honor and her child?"

"No, I don't excuse her. It was a bad business, any way; but it was a choice between two wrongs, and I don't say she did right; but certainly, as it turned out, she was lucky. Baron Waldeyer suited her to a *T*; and they walked hand in hand, with their heads in the air, as long as he lived."

"Well, how does she feel toward my father now?"

"There is no pique or temper about her. She has a great respect and regard for father, because of the relation in which she once stood to him, — that 's all."

"Well, if she spurned and slighted him, and your mother and mine took him up, then she cheapens both

him and our mother; and do you suppose she or we are going to stand that, — from a woman who is no better than she should be? Are we going to give up and come down, and put both our pride and our principle in our pockets?"

"O Julia, don't be so uncompromising! Everybody in this wicked world goes amiss in some way or other, and we forgive them as we hope to be forgiven. Shall we be placable and compliant to every form of wrong and meanness but one, and savage and vindictive over that? Can't you imagine that there is and has been so much good about the woman, now and for these many years, that it would be shameful not to overlook an error of her unhappy and frantic youth? Before God, I believe she has lifted her soul toward light and love with such purpose and energy as not one human being in thousands is capable of, and that in that respect her example would elevate the best of us!

"Why, Jule, think of it! Unless our existence is a misfortune and a mistake, we children ought not to regret her act. Our life, whatever good there is in it, could not have been unless she had left our father. If we cannot regret it, ought we to be so sharp in condemning it?"

"Do they all think as you do, Eugene, — mother and all? If they do, I may as well give up and come down; but I should like to ask you, young man, what is going to become of society if such views become general?"

"There it is again! Such views never can become general. What is to hinder us from taking each case

on its private merits? What reason is there for not doing so? The sooner society gets rid of formulas and conventions, the better for it! I did not come here, however, for this kind of discussion. I came to say that the baron is worried to have you kept so long in this stupid hotel, and he suggests that we should breakfast at seven, and drive for a couple of hours before the train goes at nine.

"You know Cherbourg is one of the great fortresses of Europe, — the mailed hand of France closed in the face of England. Will you go? He said I was not to tease you, but just find out what you would like."

"Oh, yes; I should like it immensely," said Julia; "but first I must telegraph to papa."

And together they concocted the following message: —

CHERBOURG, August 26.

ADRIAN DYSART, STEAMER CELTIC, ARRIVING AT QUEENSTOWN, IRELAND, — Mother nearly well. Will wait for you at Hotel Splendide, Paris. J. & E. D.

"Now," said Julia, "send me some rolls and coffee here, and I will come down to the lodge in half an hour."

It was but little after seven when they started on their excursion. Over the deep, damp green of the hillsides they drove to the top of the ridge, which commands a perfect view of the cordon of great forts which converge their fire upon the breakwater and the roadstead. The baron knew the history of the place, and

told it in such a way as to make it both interesting and memorable. Afterwards they were driven inside one of the forts, and its construction was explained. The commandant, recognizing in the baron his superior officer, turned out the whole garrison for inspection and guard-mounting, and the barbette guns thundered forth a salute.

This programme, so novel and unexpected to the young people, and the distinction which marked her arrival on these strange shores, greatly impressed Julia, and she looked very stately and brilliant as she bowed to either side, in response to the salute of the glittering ranks between which they issued from the sally-port of the fortress.

When, half an hour later, they were seated in the railway *coupé* which the baron had secured, she said, with perfect sincerity, "I never expected to understand any strange place and scene so well as I do this, thanks to you, Baron Waldeyer. The frontispiece of my book of Europe is clear and sharp enough, however vague other pictures may be."

"You are very good, mademoiselle. I feared that I might have wearied you with so many purely military details."

"I enjoyed it of all things," said Julia. "It is always a treat to listen to experts. One is not always lucky enough to find an expert who is both soldier and engineer, like yourself. You know it is the current opinion that Americans are very inquisitive, and I fear you will agree with current opinion presently; for there

are some questions I want to ask, only you are not to answer any which seem perplexing or compromising. Your home is in Alsace, is it not?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Then you are a citizen of the German Empire?"

"At present, yes, — by the fortune of war."

"But did not the fortune of war, in this case, restore to Germany that which was originally her own? Is not Alsace, in every way, more truly a part of Germany than of France, and was it not actually so before the war of 1870?"

"I do not think we exactly admit that. Alsace had been an integral part of France for a hundred and seventy-three years. More than six generations of its people had been citizens of France."

"But," said Julia, "I notice that all the names on my map of Alsace are German names; and I have somewhere seen it stated that, to nine out of ten of the people, the German is the mother-tongue. They are cut off from France by a mountain range over which are few highways, and they are united to Germany by the Rhine, — a river which rises in German-speaking lands, and draws all its commerce from German ports.

"I am a democrat, you know, and believe that a country belongs to its own people. If the Alsatians are Germans, why should they not remain so? A century or two of French occupation has not made it French, and it has easily reverted to its German relations."

"Mademoiselle will pardon me, but might she not as well say that, by the same arguments, the United States

still belong to England, or would do so if she for a time could hold possession of them? Is it possible that mademoiselle's sympathies were not with France in the German war, and she an American, and America the old and natural ally of France?"

"It is not a question of sympathies, Baron; and if it were, you know that we had not much love for France during our late war. She took the occasion of our difficulties to attempt to establish her own dominion on our continent. I come from the Northern States, and we know there that France as well as England was jealous, as well she may be, of our industrial North, and at heart wished that the agricultural South might triumph over the North, whose manufactures press those of other nations so hard in all the markets of the world. Just now my sympathies are less with France than with Baron Waldeyer of Hohentauben."

"I am very much obliged to you, mademoiselle. And does this conversation turn on his interests, then?"

"Yes, sir. It seems to me this baron is in a difficult position. His heart is in France, and his home in Germany. What is to become of him in case of another war?"

"I trust mademoiselle does not doubt where he will be then. A French soldier who has served his country in the Crimea, in Algiers, and in Mexico, — in three quarters of the globe, — will not fail her when her own soil and her own life are in danger."

"But if you, a citizen of Germany, should take up arms against her, you would be a rebel, would n't you?"

"Certainly, mademoiselle, I shall be a rebel."

"And your estates will be confiscated to the Empire?"

"Possibly, for a time."

"Permanently, if France be again vanquished. Is it not so?"

"It might be, mademoiselle; but now again I am sure of your sympathy. When next we fight it will be as a republic, offering government for the people and by the people (as your great Lincoln said) to all Europe, weary of phantom empires and decrepit dynasties. We wait only until the republic has fully settled its principles, has deserved and has won the confidence of the nation and the respect of other nations. The French Republic in 1793 went forth, bold and wild, to preach a gospel of chaotic ideas to a world not yet ripe for them. She will go again, invincible as before, but now serene and justified. The people everywhere will receive her as their champion. The progress of her arms may meet reverses, but I have no fear for the final result, and no interests which I would wish to exempt from its scope. I am not thankful for any protection which Kaiser Wilhelm extends to the Barony of Hohentauben, and the time in which he will have the power to do it harm is short."

"You have no sympathy, then, with the other factions which aspire to rule France?" said Julia.

"Neither sympathy nor respect," answered the baron; "for the stupid bigot at Frohsdorf least of all. For the Orleans princes, I think them thrifty commercial men, speculators and time-servers, but incapable of under-

standing in what the true glory and grandeur of France consists. For the Napoleonists, they are egotists and fatalists, who, in their ambitious and necromantic visions, would sacrifice France to "les idées Napoliennes."

"But do you not fear the Socialists?"

"Not under the republic. The Mountain and the Commune are but the wild reaction against arbitrary power and undeserved privilege. In our large cities they may continue to exist, for there social distinctions will be most marked and most offensive; but they will not prevail over the sense and the virtue of united France. No, mademoiselle; the disasters of 1870, in sweeping away the idea of personal government, in forcing us anew and in the most sober mood to study the social problem, in laying upon us the yoke of sacrifice and labor, have indeed regenerated France. Here the revolution is nearly complete, and it only remains for us to guide and moderate its forces as it rolls anew over Europe."

"You believe it must come, then? When?"

"Ah! that I do not know. It will be whenever the nations are for a time freed from the pressure of foreign war. While that continues, the attention is turned to the frontier. The armies absorb the thought and the industry of the nations, and the loans which feed them do not at first become burdensome. It is when the disease is quieted on the surface that it returns to feed on the vitals of the state. It is ever in the feasts of triumph that the handwriting on the wall is seen."

"Oh, how dreadful it must be," said Julia, "to live

with such forebodings, — to watch the thunder-cloud rising, and to know that it will surely wrap you in its gloom, perhaps shatter you with its fire!"

"It is a solemn thing, certainly," answered the baron; "but such epochs arise in the life of every nation. Your own has but just emerged from one, whose horror one of your early Presidents foresaw when he said, 'I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just.' It is only by such convulsions that old errors are uprooted; and it is in such periods that the best work of the world is done, — the work which remains and is remembered. Is it not your Longfellow who recalls to you 'the time that tried men's souls'? —

> 'What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
> In what a forge, with what a heat,
> Were shaped the anchors of your hope!'"

"And you, Baron?"

"I hope to be used while there is use in me, and to stand out of the way when I can no longer be serviceable. I would invert the words of Louis XIV. and say, 'Moi, c' est l' état.'"

"Well," said Julia, "I have certainly used my Yankee gift of questioning to purpose this time. Thanks to it, I now know Baron Waldeyer better than I could have done in weeks of mere observation."

"Ah, mademoiselle, how very unlike all others are your American young ladies! It is not in yourself only that I have observed this quick way of studying people and character. I do not know whether I am not cha-

grined to have exploited my position so readily and so fully."

"Let me reassure you, then, Baron. I fancy that we study only what we believe to be worth knowing; and words which come, like yours, from the conscience and the reason, are sure of attention and respect. It is delightful to find a French gentleman and soldier who knows so well our American history and literature."

"It is the astonishing success and greatness of your nation, revealed daily in a stronger light, which draws all eyes to your methods. It is the sense and force with which Wheaton and Motley and Cushing read the puzzling scroll of European affairs that convinces us that we may, if we will, learn much of you. More than that, it is the erect and untrammelled mode of thinking and expression which we see in so many Americans, men and women, which shows us that, either in or out of your schools, the substantial gifts of education are diffused among you as they are nowhere else."

"If this is a mutual admiration society," put in Eugene, "I should like to know it. The way you two bandy compliments is a caution to bystanders, as we say in the favored land you speak of. Let your magnanimity rest now for a little while, I beg you, and tell me what is our chance for some dinner by and by. That early drive has made me as hungry as a wolf."

"Let us see," said the baron, "where are we? This river is the Rille, I think; and it is twelve o'clock. We shall be at Evreux in half an hour, and there is a *buffet*

there, Monsieur Eugene. He is your youngest, I believe, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, our youngest, — *l'enfant terrible*, and horribly vexatious sometimes. It is not well for him to be hungry. When we get to Evreux we will place him in a high chair, move him up to table, put a bib on him, and observe."

"You will observe, then, that he is equal to the occasion," said the young man.

"When shall we get to Paris, Baron?" said Julia.

"About six in the evening," was the answer.

"Well," said she, "this is Tuesday, and my father cannot arrive before Friday or Saturday. We will wait for him, I think; but we ought not and will not detain you for so long. Eugene and I can amuse ourselves very well."

"Mademoiselle has perhaps friends in Paris, who will occupy her time?"

"No, indeed," said Julia; "but time is not apt to pass slowly, I believe, when one is seeing Paris for the first time."

"Then, if there are no older friends, I shall ask the pleasure of being your guide. What would be your idea? What do you most wish to see?"

"I think my idea would be to get a general idea of the city and its localities, and leave special things, such as museums, collections, and shops, for some more leisurely visit. But are you sure, Baron, that you do not want your time for other places and engagements?"

"Quite sure, mademoiselle. I must remain in Paris

for two or three days, at all events, and shall have very little to do, — merely to receive instructions for a period of residence in America."

"Are you really going to America, then, Baron? Where shall you be, and how long shall you stay?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, I have told the President that I would go. I shall be mostly in Washington and New York, and wherever else are arsenals and forts. My errand concerns both military and telegraphic business."

"And when do you go?"

"That is left to my convenience, but a month or two from now, probably."

"And your sister, the baroness?"

"She will probably accompany me. Life at Hohentauben would be very sad for her alone; and for my own sake too I should wish it. You will understand that when you come to know her."

"She seems, indeed, to have a very strong hold upon all who know her. I almost fear to place myself within the influence of one who has so captivated all the members of my own family. It would be impossible not to recognize her great kindness to my mother; and yet you will perhaps understand and excuse me if I say that I have not desired to see Helen identified with her."

"Certainly, I can understand it perfectly; and therefore there is nothing to excuse. I can only hope that you may sometime feel otherwise."

There were still some hours of daylight left when they reached Paris. On their way to the hotel the baron

made a *détour* to the Arc d' Etoile, that Julia might see the throng of carriages rolling through the Champs Elysées toward the Bois de Boulogne. Every moment scenes, familiar enough to fancy, appeared to her in reality, and her rapid and piquant comments and the glow of her beautiful face charmed the baron.

This charm was renewed and increased as day by day they went forth, for their mutual sight-seeing, to the Tower of St. Jacques, the heights of Montmartre, the ruined terraces of St. Cloud, or the bastions of Mont-Valérian. The baron showed her not only the physical features of the scene, but the points memorable in the history of the monarchy, the republic, the empire, and the commune.

CHAPTER XXI.

AND MR. DYSART.

ON the second morning after her arrival in Paris Julia received this telegram: —

QUEENSTOWN, August 27.

Just in. Yours received. Hope to join you at the Splendide on the evening of the 29th.

A. D.

The baron, preferring not to intrude on the family reunion, excused himself for the evening, and Mr. Dysart arrived in time to dine alone with his children. The father saw again the daughter who had always been his peculiar pride, and the son who, during the separation of more than a year, had grown into manhood. They had much to tell, — Eugene, of the experience of the summer, and of the state of matters at Hohentauben; Julia, of her voyage, and of her stay in Paris; and Mr. Dysart, of his visit to Colorado, with its dramatic events.

The story did not suffer by his telling. He spoke in the warmest terms of Robert, whom he represented not only as the preserver of his life, but as a most able man and valuable friend. Of his future he had no doubt. An election for Congress was, he told them, to be held a few

days after he left; and Robert would without doubt be chosen. No better choice could be made: he was not only a scholar and a gentleman, but a thorough business man, with broad views and large experience in all lines of thought and action.

His own visit to Colorado had been a great success. The villany of those miners had recoiled upon their own heads; and, as a result, he and Mr. Audran had become the joint owners of a mine of great promise. He had been systematically deceived with regard to it; and, had he parted with it when urged to do so, would have thrown away a splendid opportunity of fortune. When he received the telegram calling him to Hohentauben, he was expecting a visit from California capitalists of great mining experience, who, if satisfied, would probably offer a good price for the property. He had hoped to receive a telegram at Liverpool. Mr. Audran had power to close the bargain, if he thought best.

And then his mind reverted to the baroness, and he questioned Eugene closely about her.

"It seems to me," said Julia, "that this meeting will be very awkward. For the life of me, I cannot tell how you can meet her, or how she can receive you. She is a great talker, by all accounts; and if she insists on discussing everything, and raking up old grievances, it will be horrid for us all."

"I don't know that," said Eugene. "If there is one thing more to be observed than another in Madame Waldeyer, it is her tact. She has a genius for doing the right thing at the right time; and I don't think it is tact

alone either, but the quickness of her sympathy and the fineness of her sense."

"I have no fears," said Mr. Dysart. "Manuela never made one uncomfortable. With all her impulsiveness, and her resolute determination to have her own way, she was never regardless of the feelings of others. She suffered a great deal, but she never complained. Had she done so, it might have been better for us both. It was her way to act rather than to speak; I dare say it is so still."

"And so I am the only rebel in the family," said Julia. "What can be the reason that mother and father and Helen and Eugene and Alice and Mr. Audran, all forsake the principles by which we have lived, swallow this scapegrace of a woman without the least difficulty, — take her right into their hearts and lives, — and never seem to think themselves contaminated or compromised in the least by doing so? Charity covers a multitude of sins; but, in this case, it would seem either that it is extraordinary charity or that the sins in question are nothing more than harmless vagaries, not worth either rebuking or denouncing. Now, if she were a penitent and a suppliant, timid and despairing, there would be some grace and some sense in all this forgiving; but we are not asked to forgive nor to forget. Rather we are expected and privileged to ignore our injuries, and turn another cheek to the smiter. It is too much, — too bitter, too degrading!"

"Well, Julia," said Eugene, "I must say that I am astonished. You beat and heat and aggravate your feel-

ings, and work yourself up into a state of mind, as if you were afraid your own propriety would evaporate, unless you concentrated it in some malignant visitation upon this poor, loving woman; or as if you supposed the baroness were planning to subjugate us all, and triumph over us after having humbled us."

"Yes, Eugene, that is just what I do suppose. She may, and she probably will, have the sense and forbearance not to parade this; but, in her heart, she must feel that she has vanquished us and the Right together; and we must feel that, when our sensibilities and our consciences and society and religion all proclaimed just cause for offence, not to be overlooked or pardoned, we have shuffled, like poor Toots, and said, 'It 's of no consequence, — none whatever!' What does it mean? Why is it that we are all here, hurrying on together to help in our own destruction, to betray our own cause?"

"What did you come for, Julia?" said Mr. Dysart.

"To get my mother, — to get her away from that place and out of the protection of this soft and treacherous, this fast and loose woman!" cried Julia, greatly excited; "to nurse and tend her, if God spares her life; and, if she must die, to help her die, as she has lived, shunning evil, cleaving to good, — her own pure life unstained by any complicity with fraud or shame.

"I do not want to persecute anybody. Leave Madame Waldeyer alone, with the wages of her sin and the mercy of God. When Christ said to the woman, 'Neither do I accuse thee,' he said also, 'Go in

peace,' — if you can. He did not wish to be pestered with her company!"

"My dear, vivid, fervid girl," said her father, "only wait and see; and don't imagine that I do not and cannot sympathize with your startled and stern sense of justice and propriety. But you have not told me anything about the baron. What of him?"

"Oh," said Julia, "the baron is quite another person. He is a nice man, very nice indeed, — a truly courteous, sad, polite, earnest person. The iron entered into his soul when France was bejuggled by Napoleon and crushed by Bismarck, and he lives only to see it disenchanted of its errors, redeemed by its labors, and made glorious by its patriotism. He may not be strong or great, but he is thoughtful and diligent and good. I should say that he had been almost overpowering in his politeness, if he had not been so full of his duty as a soldier and a republican. There is something heroic about the baron. You will see him in the morning, and you must be sure to thank him for his great attention and care to make my stay in Paris entertaining and instructive. But he will not go with us to Hohentauben: he is to remain here a day or two longer."

"Then you do not think that he and his sister are combined in a scheme to work their wicked will with us?" said Mr. Dysart.

"Oh, no!" was the answer. "The baron is too simple, too sincere, for that."

"And yet," said Eugene, "you have known him only three days. You have dealt with him as a photographer

does with a little picture: you have thrown him up into a scale of ideal excellence and grandeur; and you have poked the baroness, whom you have never seen, down into the shadows of the pit. I don't like to call you unjust, Juley; still I will just remark that this is at least rather a rapid exercise of judgment."

"Rapid or not," said she, "it is not so much so as yours when you said that she had aspired after holiness and heaven as not one woman in a thousand ever does, — though, indeed, there is little doubt that she has need to do so!"

"Well, my young friends," said Mr. Dysart, "you have covered the whole ground by your discussion, and I am glad to have you do so; and now let me say that you would better let this problem rest for a while. We don't know exactly in what shape it will next present itself to us. Uncle Abe, you know, used to say that it was time enough to cross rivers when you came to them. There is apt to be a considerable difference between the judicial and the prejudicial view of things."

A knock at the door of the room suspended the conversation. It was opened for the delivery of a telegram addressed to Mr. Dysart, which ran as follows: —

FOUNTAIN, COLORADO, August 26.

Sold to S. & F., at three hundred. Fifty per cent in cash, and balance fully assured by certificates of deposit on First National Bank of Denver, and Riggs & Co., Washington. Election of 23d a sweepstakes. Am coming out, Str. Mosel, from New York, September 4.

ROBERT AUDRAN.

Mr. Dysart read with evident complacency.

"May I see it?" said Julia; and her father handed it to her.

"S. & F.?" said she. "Who are they?"

"S. & F. are Shood & Flaron. If you knew anything about bonanzas, you would know who they are."

"Three hundred. That is n't much," said Julia.

"Thousand is understood, you chick."

"Three hundred thousand!" said Eugene. "Whew! That 's something like a plum, governor!"

"It 's not a plum for your tasting, young man. Now, God be thanked! I can make everything right with Manuela. It is the old saw over again, — that it takes a mine to pay for a mine. O children, the shadows of my life are lifting! I have not ruined the soul that was given me to keep, and I can make good again the fortune of that proud and patient old man, her father."

"And what about my mother, sir?" said Julia, almost fiercely.

"Your mother, child, — your mother? She is Heaven's best and least-deserved gift to me. She took my scarred and sordid spirit home, and wrapped it in the grace and sweetness of her own. Whatever life I have or may have above and beyond the schemes of commerce, I owe to her and you. Thank God again for her spared life! We may yet grow old together, and trim our lamps anew for the coming of the Bridegroom.

"At what hour can we start to-morrow, and when shall we get there?"

"You can't get through in a day, father," said Eu-

gene. "It is ten hours to Strasburg, two from there to Colmar, and then a carriage ride of an hour."

"And so Mr. Audran is coming for Helen," said Julia, recurring to the telegram. "I am sure, if he is all you say he is, father, it is the best thing which could possibly happen. It will deliver her from the baroness, at all events. This election news means that he is going to Congress from Colorado, I suppose; so he will live at Washington, at least during the session. Dear me! The baron is going there too. Did you know that, papa?"

"What! Baron Waldeyer? You did not tell me that. In what capacity, pray?"

"He is to be attached to the French Legation, he says, — nominally, that is; but really he is sent to study our system of manufacturing arms and telegraph equipments. He starts in a few weeks. You must see him before you leave the city, father."

"He might breakfast with us," said Mr. Dysart. "Eugene, ask him to do so, with my compliments; and tell me, if we get to Strasburg to-morrow night, when do we reach Colmar, or wherever it is that the baroness lives?"

"We shall get to Colmar by ten next morning, and to Hohentauben by eleven," answered Eugene.

Mr. Dysart immediately telegraphed his intentions to his wife.

The father's first impressions of the baron were like those of his daughter Julia, — that he was a man who cultivated a formal manner as a protection to himself;

and Mr. Dysart set himself at once to throw this fence down.

"We are under very great obligations to you, Baron," said he, "not only for your kindness in coming so far to meet and welcome my daughter, but for the unusual opportunities which you have given her to understand and enjoy all the new things which she has seen. She has told me of your little excursions at Cherbourg and around Paris, in terms which make me regret that I could not have been here to profit by such company."

"It has been a great pleasure to attend Miss Dysart; and perhaps my experience this summer with her sister has taught me how best to interest her. It is easy to talk with your daughters, Mr. Dysart: they have the art of drawing out what they wish to know; and the themes which interest them are those upon which a man likes to talk."

"We go to Hohentauben — or at least we start — to-day," said Mr. Dysart. "You are soon to be there, I hope?"

"In two days," answered the baron.

"Do you think Mrs. Dysart will soon be able to leave?"

"Manuela would never forgive me if I said that," answered the baron. "If you go this morning, it is already time you were on your way. You will allow me to attend you to the station."

It was a silent party which occupied the car from Strasburg to Colmar next day. Mr. Dysart was too

much absorbed in thought for conversation, Julia too nervous; only Eugene seemed at ease.

They were nearing the station when Julia asked Eugene, "Who will be there to meet us? Will it be the baroness? I hope not; though, after all, the sooner the meeting is over, the better."

"Wait and see," answered Eugene. "I know no more than you. Helen will be there, at any rate."

At Hohentauben was also a council on the same subject. It was called by the baroness, who also dictated its conclusions, most acceptable to Mrs. Dysart and Helen. The programme of the baroness was this: that Helen should meet her father and sister at Colmar, and accompany them to the castle; that Mrs. Dysart should receive them at the *porte cochère;* that three hours should be given them for rest and conference, if such they desired; and that she herself should be in the parlor to receive them at two o'clock, — half an hour before dinner.

The baroness followed Helen to the carriage, and, as she was about to take her place in it, drew from her bosom a thin package, and handed it to her. "Darling," said she, "that is for your father. It is very precious, very valuable, very costly; and I want you to give it to him with your own hands. Will you take the time to do so when your greetings are over, and when, as is natural, you begin to speak of me, and the circumstances under which we meet? I wish especially that your father and mother should have time to consider what it contains before I see them."

She trembled with emotion as she drew Helen into her arms, and hid her tearful face upon her daughter's shoulder. "Remember, dear," said she, "you are all I have in life. You are my only one. Without you, I am a lost soul!"

Helen was almost as much moved as her mother, as she answered, "Dearest mother, there must be and there is some way to make this right; and surely, as I am your child, it will be found. Nothing shall ever estrange me from you, — never! Good-by, dear, good mother!" She hastened to the carriage, and, as it rolled down the lawn, looked back to see the baroness, erect and smiling now, and throwing kisses to her daughter.

"We shall soon be there," said Eugene, as the train entered the scattering suburbs of Colmar.

"Yes," said Julia, "and then there will be a scene. Father has not spoken a word all the morning. He is dreading the meeting, I know. You won't be any more magnanimous than she is, will you, papa? Promise me that you won't!"

"I hope I may behave as well," said Mr. Dysart sadly.

"Here we are!" cried Eugene; "and there is Helen, alone on the platform."

One moment more, and Helen was in her father's arms. He kissed her fondly; then held her off at arm's length, and looked at her. "The same old girl," said he. "Just as sweet as ever, Nell."

"The same old father," said she, "and handsomer, I declare! And Jule, Queen Jule, how splendid you are! And what have you done with your baron?"

"Is she here, Nell, — the Waldeyer woman?"

"Oh, don't, Julia! Don't speak of her so! She is the sweetest, dearest creature! And she is my mother, — remember that, Julia."

"Don't talk to me, then, about her," cried Julia viciously. "If I am to take to her at all, it must be in my own fashion, and for my own reasons. If you will all persist in bowing down to her —"

"Remember all she has done for mother," said Eugene, "and don't be rude at first. If you don't go wrong at the outset, you will soon learn the proprieties of the place."

They were soon seated, and driving across the meadows of the Ill. The noble Norman horses, the handsome carriage with the Waldeyer crest, the complete appointments of the coachman and the footman attracted Julia's notice. "She does things in style, don't she?" was her remark.

"Where shall we see your mother?" said Mr. Dysart.

"She will be waiting in the porch to receive you," answered Helen.

"How does she look, Nell? I could not bear to see her ill and broken."

"You will not think so at all, except when she moves," said Helen. "She walks feebly still, otherwise she is very well, and for the last few days has been so happy and eager over your coming. You will not see the baroness for two hours or more, — not until just before dinner."

"So," said Mr. Dysart, "she makes you do the honors, then? That is right, — you are the daughter of the house."

"Oh, dear papa, I thank you for the word! Indeed, it must be so! It would break her heart — and almost mine — if it were not so."

"She may not have you very long, Helen. There is somebody else between here and Colorado who is speculating as to where you belong."

"Robert!" said Helen, with a brilliant smile. "Yes, you know him now, as well as I do, papa; and I only hope you like him as well, that 's all."

"He 's splendid, my dear. He is just the man for you, and you are good enough for any man. And I am well aware that he has told you so."

"Yes, he has," said Helen, "and he keeps telling me so, which is the best of all."

"Well, I have great news for you, Helen, — great and good news of Mr. Audran. I expected it, but it only came last night by telegram."

"What is it, papa? Oh, what?" cried Helen, with dilated eyes.

"Only that he has made his fortune, my love. Wealth and honor have come to him, as he deserves; merit he had before. He saved and recovered for me a property which he has now sold for a great price, and he has been chosen by an overwhelming vote to represent his district in Congress; and there will be few better men than he to meet him there. And, Nell, no sooner does this come about than he starts right off to bring it all to you. He will be here in a fortnight, and I think you ought to be two happy people."

"You are the best man in this world, father, and he

is the next. You admit that one half that is true, Julia, and I shall never rest till you think the other half true also."

"It appears to me," said Julia, "that there 's no particular use in my having any mind of my own. My world seems to be filling up rapidly with ready-made relations whom I never heard of before. Have n't you got a paragon or two somewhere, Eugene, for my acceptance?"

"I don't know how it will be when the baron gets back, Jule. You said some very fine things about him when we were in Paris. You called him 'nice.'"

Julia looked at him an instant, as though she would look him into the ground. "You unmannerly boy!" said she. "What a shame to speak of him so!"

Helen's face brightened. "O Julia, I am so glad he went to meet you! Is n't he as charming as can be? And he is just as good as he seems."

"I don't feel called upon to make any comments about the baron," said Julia, "and I beg you won't commend me to him, if you do him to me. Oh, but this *is* beautiful!"

They had reached the top of the ravine over a roadway carpeted with fallen leaves. Before them was the lakelike expanse of the Fecht, and on the right, above, the green lawn stretching up to the gray old castle.

At the porch on the southern front stood Mrs. Dysart. The illness which had opened with such sudden and alarming symptoms had left no trace upon her sweet face, or rather, by the rest and regimen which it had

imposed, had renewed its softness and bloom. Happy wife and proud mother! She received her husband and children with an air so charmed and so charming that Mr. Dysart, as he kissed her for the third time, said, "Eugenia, it 's worth coming five thousand miles to see you looking so well!"

"And you can't be very helpless, mother," said Julia, "if you managed to get into that dress. And who in the world did your hair in such a pretty way?"

Helen answered, "The baroness's maid, Marie, is very clever, Julia."

"It was not Marie, to-day," said Mrs. Dysart. "The baroness herself insisted upon superintending my toilet, and she was as pleased as a child with the result. Now, Adrian, give me your left arm, — you see what a burden I am, — and you shall all come up to my room and sit among my honeysuckles."

"You all seem to be immensely at home here," remarked Julia.

"And so will you be before you know it, my dear," retorted Mrs. Dysart.

The young people carried Julia off first to their own chambers, and then to hers, and they ranged through hall and gallery, bringing up by and by on the balcony over the western front.

"This is very nice, I must say," owned Julia. "And so you have been here a month, Alice. What on earth have you found to do?"

"Everything was delightful until your mother was taken sick. Since then, Helen has been with her most

of the time. She and the baroness would hardly ever let me take my turn in sitting with her."

"Alice has had three gentlemen to look after," said Helen. "I don't know what she would have done without them or what they would have done without her. She distributed her attentions very fairly for a while, but lately I noticed that the baron and Eugene were apt to go off shooting by themselves. This is a great place for pigeons, you know, — Hohentauben."

"Walter does n't care for shooting doves," said Alice.

"No," said Eugene, "he preferred to study their language. And he cooed coo, cooed n't he, Alice?"

"I dare say he might if he tried. He is a capable young person, that Walter," said Alice. "I am so sorry he has gone, Julia."

"I believe you," said Julia.

"But he 'll come back to see his brother, that is, if Robert is really coming," said Alice; "and then you will have a chance to see what he is made of."

"And *she* is maid — and mistress of his affections," pursued Eugene.

"And if she is, she is n't ashamed of it," said Alice.

"That 's the place where they do it, Jule," said Eugene, "out in that summer-house which you see there. There is something very peculiar in the air of that summer-house. It takes the selfishness out of you, — makes you so kind and considerate of others, you know. I would not give two cents for any woman's independence of character, out there, or any man's, either."

"Now," said Helen, "we must go to mamma's room.

I have a very mysterious package for father, and we are all to see it delivered."

"Now, papa," she said, when they were all seated, "I don't know what this is, but it is something important. When I was leaving the house this morning, the baroness, all in tears, gave me this package, and told me to give it to you from her, when our greetings were over and we were ready to consider the circumstances of our relations to her; and that is now, I suppose. So take it." And she handed him the long, thin packet, in its fold of soft white paper.

There was a hush of earnest expectation as Mr. Dysart, with a set, pale face, took the packet and unfolded its envelope. It enclosed another wrapper of purple silk, and from the end of that hung a narrow ribbon of the same hue, to which was attached the leaden seal of St. Peter the Fisherman. Within was a scroll of parchment, written in Latin. Mr. Dysart hesitated as he deciphered it. "'Quibus hæ literæ pervenerint: Pius Nonus, Pontifex Supremus, salutem in Domino. Filia ecclesiæ delecta, Manuela Parédes, quæ diu apud Colmar Alsatiæ superioris vixerat.' No, I cannot make out this Latin. Ah! here seems to be a paper from Manuela. Yes." And he read: —

ADRIAN, — When, thirty years since, our ill-considered and unhappy union occurred, civil marriage was not known to Mexican law. The ceremony which joined us was of a purely ecclesiastical nature, and, as such, subject to the review of the Head of the Church. This

review, Pio Nono, the Holy Father, has at my request instituted; and, for reasons briefly set forth in the accompanying decree, he has annulled the marriage, and has declared that, from the day on which I left your house, you were no longer bound to me. Your subsequent marriage is, by this decree, cleared of any question which might otherwise have attached to it.

To yourself, to your honored wife and her children, I offer my sincere congratulations on this result. Shadow on their lives shall never come from me. Whatever of privilege or of love you and they may accord to me, whatever charity you may entertain for my conduct toward you, shall be freely given, and will be gratefully welcomed by

MANUELA PARÉDES DE WALDEYER.

HOHENTAUBEN, August 30, 1871.

Mr. Dysart closed his reading with faltering voice, and silence reigned in the room. Every eye, even Julia's, was swimming in tears.

Mrs. Dysart was the first to speak. "Dear creature! No one ever had it in her power so to injure me, and no one ever has been so generously kind. What return shall we make, Helen?"

"There is only one that can be made, mother, — only one which she would consider a return. Again and again she has told me that all she desires is that, without being divided from you, I shall be to her as a daughter, — the daughter that I am; that I may go and come from you to her, from her to you, and you shall think

no ill of it; that I shall love her somewhat as she loves and longs for me. And it does seem to me that if that marriage with father, which was a wrong and a fraud on both, had not been, and if she had been married to Baron Waldeyer who is dead, — as she could not be, for no tribunal on earth would have given her the divorce which she has procured for father, — her life would have been as fair, as pure, as lovely, as that of the best of women. Now I say that these hard and ugly facts were not of her will, — not altogether of herself; and that her devotion to love, to truth, to light, her triumph over wayward impulses, and the wonderful growth of her nature in knowledge and power and heavenly tenderness, are to be taken as the measure of her character, and I should be both ashamed and afraid to turn from her."

Overpowered with her own earnestness, she threw herself on her face on the sofa, sobbing like a little child.

"Who among us can deny her what she asks?" said Mr. Dysart. "But there is another return, due to ourselves, which must be made. Her fortune, while she was as dead to us, remained in my hands, and has been for thirty years the basis of our social position, the foundation and the largest part of what I called my own. It must go back to her. She has not demanded it, she never would do so; but none the less must it go back to her. No mercenary thought ever stained her soul; we must be not less careful of ours."

"But," said Mrs. Dysart, "in our first interviews,

if she did not exactly say so, she certainly intimated that she had the power to injure us all by her unsolved relations to you."

Helen raised her head and said, "Yes, mother, she did; but she did not know then with whom she had to deal. She did take account of all her resources, she weighed every point which could give influence to her claim; and she stated them as a matter which it would be proper for us to consider, not as a weapon which she intended to use. Again and again she has since said that what she desired to win from us, we being what we are, must come from love and respect alone."

"Who could blame her," said Mr. Dysart, "for dealing with us as she found us? The Bible says of the Lord, 'With the pure he will show himself pure, and with the froward he will show himself froward.' Manuela is as strong as she is magnanimous. I must go and see her. Why need I wait two hours?"

"Let me go first," said Helen, "and ask her. I would rather, indeed I would."

"Go, then, dear," said her father; and she went, and presently returned.

"The baroness says she will be glad to see you, papa. She will be in the parlor whenever you are ready. Let me brush your hair and re-tie your cravat. There!"

CHAPTER XXII.

AND THE CHORUS.

FOLLOWING Helen's direction, Mr. Dysart reached the parlor. The door stood open, and through it was blown the fragrance of rose and jasmine; the curtains were drawn to exclude the afternoon sun; and the beautiful room, with all its rich and quaint adornment, lay hushed and dim before him. He paused an instant on the threshold, before, in the far corner, he detected the figure of a woman, sitting, with averted face, near a little table. She was aware of his approach, and yet she did not move. Slowly he moved toward her, waiting for a recognition, which she did not give. "Madame Waldeyer," said he. She rose, with down-dropped eyes, and a deep, graceful salutation, and sank again into her chair.

Mr. Dysart advanced, with open hand outstretched. "Here is my hand, Manuela. Will you not give me yours?"

She rose again, and, placing her hand in his, slowly and timidly lifted her eyes to his face; and then each, with a settled gaze upon the countenance once so familiar, read the records of half a lifetime.

To both it was a revelation, mournful and eloquent.

Each saw that the other had grown out of that life, once so marked by alienation, into the ideal which would have made their natures kin and sympathetic. The exact and cold logic of the man was all overgrown with the flower and fruit of domestic life; and the intense and passionate egotism of the woman had faded in the light of mature reason and trained affections. Each had in some measure accepted the other's creed of life, and each had become distrustful of the impulse once all-important. In that moment each knew, with the knowledge which depends neither on argument nor record, that the course of the other had been steady and true to the guiding star of their youthful heaven. His dreams had been wrought by Ambition's fingers, her pictures all shaded by Love's pencil.

Mr. Dysart was the first to speak: "Manuela, I can't tell you how beautiful it is to me to find you here, full of love yourself, and shedding the comfort of love on all about you, — you whom, for so many years, I have thought of as a bewildered and misguided soul, quenched in a wild and wandering grave."

"Heaven was good to me," she replied. "God watched over those confused and wretched days when I left you and your child. He is good to me now, in bringing you both here to-day. And Heaven has been very kind, too, in rebuilding for you a home and a domestic circle richer and fairer far than that which once I ruined. For the sake of your sweet wife and children, and the life and love you have had with them, you will forgive me, Adrian? How much I owe to them all!"

"And how much my wife and all of us owe to you, Manuela, who have nursed her back to life with such love and care!"

"Is it not beautiful, Adrian, that I, who stole your false wife away from you, have been able to do something to preserve your true wife, and restore her to you? It is little, perhaps; but in it I have found ease of mind and peace of conscience. In the memory of all your happy days with her, and in the light of this moment of forgiveness, will you not forget the wrong and the unhappiness of our brief life together?"

"If *you* will, Manuela, — wrongs which, however the world may regard them, I well know began with me; not in my will perhaps, but in my absorption and blind pursuit of other objects. You, too, have much to forgive."

"I have not felt so, Adrian. Next to my desire for my daughter has always been the hope and the purpose to make whatever amends I might to you. I have watched in silence, but with great pleasure, all the events of your fortunate life. They have been known to me during all these years; and now, in the package which Helen has given you, I have, as I hope, removed the last trace of anything which could trouble or compromise you or your family. In those dark days, when we were almost forbidden to hope for Mrs. Dysart's life from hour to hour, I prayed with my whole heart that, before she died, she might know that I never would and never could injure you or her, and that her own record was from the first beyond a question."

"It would not be possible, Manuela, to be more thoughtful and more magnanimous than you have been. Mrs. Dysart feels it as I do, as Helen does. And Helen is so fond and proud of her mother!"

Mr. Dysart had been standing before her, leaning upon a pedestal which supported a bust of Dante. The baroness, with a quick impulse, rose and went to him, took both his hands in hers, and, with dewy, appealing eyes, she said, "Then it will be so, — you are willing that it shall be so. Helen may love me as her mother, and I may cherish her as *my* daughter! It has been this hope which has guided every step of mine since first I went forth to seek her. Every dream, every image, seen in absence, wrought in hope, is more than filled and satisfied in her. She is beautiful to me, — so clear, so strong, so sure, so sweet. But no thought of mine, no love of mine, no care of hers for me, shall ever limit or abridge her life. There must be some way in which I may be always a help to her, and never a burden. I did not watch or soothe her infancy, and I must not compromise her womanhood; but I know I shall have strength to stand with her and by her when I am helpful, and to stand away if ever my presence should embarrass.

"There is no need to publish or declare to the world our relation to each other. I ask nothing of the sort from any of you. Let not one particle of the claim or love of any other being be withdrawn from her because mine is added."

Mr. Dysart smiled. "Happy Helen!" said he, "she

is rich in love. But neither father nor mother, brother nor sister, can keep the first and nearest place with her. Mr. Audran comes to claim that, with my full sanction and encouragement."

"Did you say that he is coming, — coming now?" cried the baroness eagerly. "I knew it would be so, and I knew he would not come in vain. If he is nearest to Helen's heart, I am glad for him and her. I might have wished for her a greater place, but I could hardly have found a better man."

"Yes, it is so," said Mr. Dysart. "But in these few weeks honor and fortune have come to him, and it is because they are come that he hastens to ask Helen to share them." And Mr. Dysart told the outline of the story.

"Oh, I must see Helen at once!" cried the baroness; and she moved toward the bell.

"One moment!" said Mr. Dysart, stopping her. "Manuela, you have made haste to return to me my personal liberty: it is even more due to you and myself that I should restore to you the fortune which has been for so long a time in my keeping. I do not hesitate to confess that, believing you dead, and that no legal heirs of your estate existed except our daughter Helen, I have held it hitherto as my own. Helen has always been liberally cared for, and it was my purpose, as shown by every will which I have made, that she should receive a much larger portion of my estate than my other children. But now this matter must either be settled between us or it must be referred to your lawyers, with whom I may adjust it."

"Let us adjust it between ourselves, and now," said the baroness. "There is no need of consulting other people. It may be done easily."

"But I must tell you, to be fair," said Mr. Dysart, "that if lawyers were employed they would no doubt require of me an account of all the money received from your father's property, and would reckon interest from the time when it was so received. It would amount to a very large sum."

"There shall be no such reckoning," said the baroness. "You shall tell me, as nearly as your memory may serve, what the original amounts were. You were entitled, as a joint owner, to your proportion; as the agent, by whose aid alone these results could have been reached, you were entitled to a liberal commission; as the trustee who has kept them, to another; and, for the expenses of Helen's care and education, to another."

"Still," said Mr. Dysart, "with every possible deduction (of course I have reviewed this matter carefully in anticipation), there should come to you not less than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, — seven hundred and fifty thousand francs."

"It is a large sum, certainly," said the baroness. "And may I, without presumption, ask how far it will be possible for you, without embarrassment, to replace it?"

"It would have been a very serious matter to me till recently; but it is so no longer. Mr. Audran and I have just sold a mine in Colorado, and my share of the price obtained will reach at least the amount named. The

money has never been in my hands, and therefore to part with it will not alter in the least the position of my affairs as they have hitherto stood."

"And Mr. Audran is the only other party interested in this mine?" inquired the baroness thoughtfully.

"He is, or was, the only other owner."

"Then, Mr. Dysart, if you will here and now (I wish to have it done here and now) prepare a paper, by which you convey to me all your rights and interest in this mine and its sale, I will also prepare, here and now, one which shall release you from all pecuniary obligation to me. These papers may not be very formal or law-proof, but, at any rate, one will be as good as the other. Please go to that writing-table and write yours. I will do mine here."

A few moments later Helen entered. The dim light and the utter silence startled her, and she was still more surprised to see her father and the baroness seated on opposite sides of the room, with averted faces, busily engaged in writing. "I — I — hope I — do not interrupt any business?" said she slowly.

"You come in good time, dear," answered the baroness. "Wait a minute." She carried her paper and laid it on Mr. Dysart's desk. He handed his to her; she read it. "That is broad enough and strong enough, I think," said she. Then she sat down again, and wrote upon it an indorsement. "All the within-named rights and interests I hereby entirely and unconditionally give and transfer to my daughter, Helen Parédes Dysart."

"Helen," said she, "did you know that your father owned a mine in Colorado? He has made an exchange with me, and has given me his interest in that to replace mine in Mexico. And now the Clarita Mine belongs entirely to two of my friends, — to Miss Helen Dysart and Mr. Robert Audran. This is the deed of it, which I give you. And now, Helen, there is peace and forgiveness between your father and myself, and there is love unforbidden between you and me forevermore. Kiss me, my darling, and I will not be jealous of Robert, and he shall not be jealous of me."

"But, mother, this mine is worth three hundred thousand dollars. You don't know what you are doing."

"If it were worth three million, Helen, it means the Parédes property; and is not your name Parédes, and are you not the only heir of your grandfather? I know exactly what I am doing. I am keeping for myself the royalty, which is all that my father's mine now produces for its former owners; and I am giving the rest, which was never worth anything to me, to my own, my only, my darling daughter. And what a pleasure it is to do so!"

"You are too good," said Helen, — "so good that you frighten me. Now, father, am I to take this fortune, — thrown into my lap as if it were a toy?"

"It is a grand gift, Helen, grandly and beautifully given. I think you must take it, — you and Mr. Audran. It may brighten your future; it will clear and sweeten our past."

"And now," said the baroness, glancing at the Pompadour clock in the corner, "let us have all the others here. Dinner will be announced presently."

In due time they appeared. Helen presented Julia. The baroness received her simply and cordially.

"And this is Miss Julia," said she. "How much I have speculated about her! She has come to answer all my questions. You are very welcome to Hohentauben, my dear. I hope my baron has made you understand that in advance."

"Hohentauben is a lovely place," said Julia amiably.

"Look at it from this window," said the baroness, drawing her into an embrasure. "It is an ancient barony, given to the Waldeyers by the Emperor Rudolph, when he was only Landgrave of Alsace. It has been in the family ever since, — six hundred years. The baron is the last of his race."

"He is not very much in sympathy with feudal ancestors," said Julia. "He seems to me a very good republican."

"And not the less good," answered the baroness, "in that he divests himself of the pride and the privilege of his family for the sake of his opinions."

"Does he spend much time here?" asked Julia.

"No," said the baroness. "His whole heart has been in his military life. It is only since the death of his brother that he has come here to protect and cheer my solitude. The estate belongs to him. I am only a tenant-at-will."

"And is not the care of the estate an immense burden?" asked Julia.

"Not necessarily," said the baroness. "It has been a great study to me, and a great pleasure. The late baron allowed me to manage it. There are forty-two farms, and, with the people about the house, nearly two hundred tenants; and, though I give much of my time to it when I am here, I have so good a steward that it goes perfectly well in my absence."

"Madame est servie," announced the butler, with great gravity.

"Come, my dear," said the baroness, offering her arm to Julia. "Mrs. Dysart, will you conduct your husband? Keep your own place on my right; the next is for Mr. Dysart. And you, Miss Julia, are to sit here, next to Helen. I cannot spare her from my left."

The baroness was at her very best that day. The quickness with which she caught and followed every thought, uttered or unexpressed, the ingenuity with which she charmed away every sense of oppression or restraint, were no novelty to Helen and her mother; but to Mr. Dysart they were a mystery, and to Julia a perfect fascination.

Some hours later, coffee was served in the summer-house by the river, and the young people went off by themselves for a stroll up the ravine of the Vogelbach.

"Well, Julia," said Alice, "what do you think of the baroness now?"

"I think she is charming," answered Julia; "but she puzzles me. She sets all my ideas of life wrong. I do not know whether it is her wonderful tact, or what it is,

that gets inside of everybody's defences. I did not mean to like her."

"I told you in Paris, Julia," said Eugene, "that it was less tact than the quickness of her sympathies and the kindness of her heart. You will believe it more and more every day."

"I did not mean to like her either," said Alice. "I said some very harsh things about her that morning when we met her on the boat, Eugene; but I have never said them since, and I do not feel them now. Helen and Mr. Audran believed in her from the first. Is n't it strange that we younger people should have been more incredulous and intolerant than our elders and betters?"

"I don't know," said Eugene thoughtfully. "I suppose that older people feel how easy and how human it is to err, and how rare and difficult to redeem a fault, as she has done. But this case, I am sure, is not to be judged by any rule; it is one by itself, and there will never be another like it."

The 10th of September was fixed for their departure from Hohentauben. Mr. Audran might be expected in Paris on the 16th. Mrs. Dysart was now quite well enough to travel, and felt that she had been admonished not to remain longer abroad.

The baron returned on the second day, and announced that he had orders to report in Washington by the first of November; and the baroness immediately decided to accompany him. In the week that remained, he was anxious to redeem his promise to show Mr. Dysart something of the Vosges and Alsace. The younger

people were always ready; the baroness preferred to stay with Mrs. Dysart; Helen generally remained with them.

Letters from Mr. Audran came at intervals of a few days. The most important facts had already been announced by telegram; but, to Helen, the events of his life were less interesting than the portrait of his mind which she read on every page. He was coming, — coming to claim her. The letters did not yet declare it; but they reported the progress of negotiations about the mine, and of a political canvass, the result of which had already been learned by cable. Day by day, as this result became more clearly outlined, Robert made it evident that, whenever either event were realized, he should seek her again. The dearest fruit of success would be that he might claim her consent to grace and guide his opening career.

At length a letter of August 24 told of his election. He would take his seat at the coming session, in December. Would she be with him? That question he should ask her face to face. There was no longer time to wait her permission to come on such an errand: he should come. The sale of the mine would almost certainly be effected within three days. His position then would be assured, — one worthy of her, and his love for her. "I shall telegraph the result," he wrote. "You will know how it has gone long before you read this diary of my hopes, and their delay."

Meantime, the days passed rapidly. Every morning Mr. Dysart, Julia, Alice, and Eugene went forth with the

baron on some new quest, leaving Helen with the elder ladies, by whom her new life was proudly and fondly discussed and planned.

Helen had taken great pains that Julia should remain ignorant how far matters had gone between the baron and herself; and the baron came to believe that in her conversation with him she had almost indicated that he might find in the younger sister that which the elder withheld. The poor baron! With many a twinge of sharp compunction at his own infidelity, he perceived that he was daily becoming more sensitive to the charm of Julia's bright and warm enthusiasm and quick perceptions and enjoyments. Enveloped in the fresh life of these young people, it was impossible to be always thinking of a drama closed and a curtain rung down.

Mr. Audran's relations with the Dysarts were too intimate and pressing to escape discussion, even in his presence; and the baron said to himself, "I might better do my duty, — congratulate Miss Dysart on her lover and his fortunes. It will put us at once on more easy and more natural terms; and the sooner it is done, the better."

So he made his opportunity by detaining her one evening, after the others had left, — a stratagem which she easily detected, but to which she yielded, for she could well divine what was passing in his mind.

"I have a word for you, Miss Dysart," said he, "if you will give me a few moments. Day by day I have been realizing and appreciating the truth and the kindness with which you spoke when I dared to lay my heart open

before you. You tried to make me believe that I had mistaken my own mind, because you knew — none so well as you — how utterly closed for me was the path along which I had permitted it to travel. I should not have suffered such feeling to grow within me, if I had not believed you free. I have heard how fortune has befriended Mr. Audran, how vital and well-assured are his hopes; and in learning this I have also learned how gently and kindly you dealt with mine. I owe you thanks: why should I not speak them? I am so sincere in my desire for your honor and happiness that I must congratulate you on their assured establishment. In the same terms I shall congratulate Mr. Audran, when I meet him. He can neither wonder nor blame me that I recognized all that he so highly values." And then he paused.

Helen answered, "There is nothing too good for you, Baron Waldeyer. You have paid me the highest of compliments in so fully understanding and acknowledging what I wished and tried to do. Your thanks I return to you with interest. I am not yet pledged to Mr. Audran: how soon I may be, I do not know; but then, as now, I shall remember with infinite gratitude your feeling for me, and the noble way in which you replace it with one which asks no more than a return of confidence and respect. Now, at any rate, you are to be my friend for life. Let there never be cloud or reserve between us!"

She bade him good-night, and each felt a sense of relief as they parted in the hall.

The day of departure arrived. Leaving on the 10th,

they hoped to reach Paris by the 12th; and the baroness, who could hardly bear Helen out of her sight, asked permission to join them on the 20th.

"It will be all over with you by that time, Helen," said she. "And who knows what cares may not then be coming on you? Your mother cannot go out with you much, and Julia is a stranger in Paris. You will want me to introduce you to all my tradesmen. If my daughter should happen to be in Washington this winter, she must go as befits her position and fortune. What do you say about that, darling?"

"I think it would be better if none of us speculated on such a contingency at present," said Helen. "You will come to Paris, at any rate, mother. Perhaps I may return to Hohentauben with you. In any case, you shall have your full share in any experience of mine."

Breaking their journey by a halt at Nancy, they reached Paris without events on the second day; and Mr. Dysart at once telegraphed to the steamer "Mosel," at Southampton, that Mr. Audran would find them at the Hotel Splendide.

At noon of the 16th Mr. Audran answered from Havre that he hoped to reach Paris by the train at seven the same evening. It was proposed that they should wait dinner for him, but Helen objected. "Mr. Audran will be tired and travel-stained," said she, "in no mood for a dinner party"; to which Alice provokingly interposed, "Oh, very well, dear. You want him all for yourself; that's natural enough." Eugene added, "We must

let them adjust their little differences, you know, before we shall know how to behave."

"The rest of you may do as you like," said Mr. Dysart, "but I am going to the train to fetch him. Whatever he may be to the rest of you, he is better than any other man to me."

Helen's grateful glance answered for one, at least.

It was half-past seven when the gentlemen exchanged their greetings on the platform. Each could give to all the questions of the other the most satisfactory answers, as they drove toward the hotel.

Yes, everybody was well. Mrs. Dysart's accident was but an accident, and the traces of it were fast leaving her. They were all going home; and he, — had he come over to go back with them?

"There is only one who can answer that question," said Mr. Audran, "and her answer I must have to-night."

Would Mrs. Dysart excuse him for the present, and would Miss Helen see him very soon?

"Yes, we will all keep in the background, — the proper position for parents and friends in such cases, — till we are called in to play our part. In fact, Mr. Audran, I think the rest of us might as well go to the opera. Shall I tell Helen that you will meet her in the parlor in half an hour?"

"Oh, thank you! In half an hour, or less," answered Robert.

Helen was prompt to the appointment. "He shall see me as he left me," she thought, as she looked at

her dress of white grape silk, and the Sofrana roses in her hair. She was standing, with beating heart, between the curtains of the window when he entered the room, and as she turned to meet him the soft light, filtering through the crimson screen around the lustre, fell on her flushing cheek and ivory throat.

"Helen!" said he, with outstretched hand and appealing glance.

"O Robert!"

"Helen, have I come for good?"

"I hope so, indeed," said she.

"And you will not send me away again?"

"I will not send you away."

"You will bid me stay?"

"I will bid you do what is in your own heart, Robert."

"And you will be my wife, Helen?"

"If you ask me, by and by I will."

"I have done nothing but ask you for two months. Did I not ask you in that parlor at Interlaken, you beauty?"

"Bygones do not count."

"Then I ask you here and now, and there must be only one answer. You belong to me, Helen! No other woman is worth my while. There is not another soul to whom I could or would give your share in all my life, my thoughts, my pleasures, my hopes, here and hereafter. There is not another whose nature I can understand or can reverence as I do yours."

"All this you will do?"

"And more. I will wonder every day and all day

that anything so sweet, so sure, so rare, should have come to me after so many years."

"Then, Robert, my lord, you are all I want!" She lifted to him her face, radiant with the glow of a heart unveiled, of a hope fulfilled. Her white arms were closed around his neck with an instinct unquestioned now, for his kiss was on her lips, and his breast absorbed the beatings of her own.

And then, after a while, she released herself, and smoothed her ruffled plumage and dried her happy tears, and said, "Come! Do you hear that music?"

A band on the opposite balcony was playing one of Verdi's waltzes. Again she stretched her arms toward him, and away they went, whirling down the long saloon; then suddenly she stopped, placed her dimpled hand on his chest, saying, "You dear man! I forgot that bullet through your lungs!" and he answered, —

"You charming woman! I forgot your strained shoulder, which I shall kiss twice, — once for now, and once for the time when I wished I might and did not."

"Yes, but then I kissed you. I have blushed every time I thought of it since; but if I never had kissed you again, I should always have been glad I did it then."

"You kissed me? You absorbed me, you mean. You drew every spark, every shade, of my resistance with them when you took those sweet lips away. I said I would, — I should, — all the world should not keep me from having a thousand more."

"But not all at once, sir. Sit down now, and tell me how we are going to live, and where."

"First, tell me when we are going to begin," said he.

"Oh, dear me, Robert, are we not happy enough now? Tell me, Mr. Legislator, am I to have a court at Washington? And will you go with the dear baroness and me to get those robes of state which she is designing for your receptions? All the cow-boys of Colorado will be there to tread on them, won't they?"

"The baroness must come to us, must not she, Helen? She will make such a grand, such a splendid chaperone?"

"Yes," said Helen, "she is superb in a drawing-room in the evening; but you don't know, sir, how sweet, how fascinating, how frolicsome she is in her chamber in the morning. That is not for you, or the like of you. What do you know of the charm which a veteran woman of society has for a young questioning thing like me?"

"I know," said he, "one woman who need ask questions of none, — who knows always exactly how to behave, and how to make others behave too."

"That 's me, of course," said Helen. "Yes, the baroness must come, sir, and by and by Julia and the baron. Do you know I am going to make those two people just as happy as we are? The baron would have fallen in love with me, if I would have allowed it, — seriously in love! He is too serious, by half, for me; but Julia is a match for him, — just as intense and strong a creature as himself. And Walter and Alice too:

Is n't it just as it should be? Answer me, you marrying man, with a big household all ready for you!"

"You don't mean to be crowded, do you, Helen?"

"I don't mean to be crowded out of your company, Robert. I am going to hunt up all your data and statistics in the congressional library, and then I am going into the gallery to hear you rehearse them, Mr. Speaker. I am going to put you into the Cabinet — or somewhere!"

It was nearly twelve when this small talk was brought to a timely end by the arrival of the remainder of the party from the opera. Alice ran on in advance, and opened the door of the parlor.

"We may come in now, may n't we, Helen? I am dying to see Mr. Audran," shaking hands heartily. "It 's all right, I know," said she, "just as well as if I had been in the room all this time."

"Yes, it 's all right," said Robert. "Helen is an angel."

"We 're all angels," said Helen. "Everything is celestial, through and through."

"Now why can't Walter come?" said Alice.

"He is coming, you dear girl," said Robert. "I telegraphed him from Havre, and he says he will be here next week."

"Next week?" said Alice. "Oh, deary dear! Why can't he come *now?* We must go home in a fortnight, and who knows when we shall see him again?"

Robert had escaped from her, and was talking to Mr. and Mrs. Dysart; then he turned to Julia. "I am go-

ing to drop the 'Miss,' and say Julia, if I may, — sister Julia, perhaps, in time. Am I getting along too fast?"

"Don't ask me, Mr. Audran. I am a cipher, a nonentity. I am the walking lady of this opera."

"But they call you queen, — Queen Julia," said he, and I think I know why; and I wish to be one of your Majesty's lieges"; and he raised her hand to his lips.

The days went by. The baroness and Walter came, and later the baron. Every one seemed to be immensely busy. The coterie rarely met before dinner. By twos or threes, in carriages, each party, all day, pursued their special quests, and Helen and Robert could not be made to join them at theatre or opera in the evening.

The outer world learned, by and by, what came of such activity, from the columns of that chronicle of gossip, the "Swiss Times." On October 8 its Parisian correspondent wrote, —

"We have to report an event brilliant in itself, and doubtless interesting to many Americans in Europe. Yesterday, at the American Chapel, by the Rev. Dr. Ganmor, of New York, were married the Hon. Robert Audran, M. C. elect from Colorado, and Miss Helen P. Dysart, daughter of the well-known banker, Adrian Dysart, of New York. The ceremony was followed by a reception, tendered by the American Minister to his national representative. The company, though not large, comprised many prominent Americans. The bride was very much admired, not less for her beauty than for her graceful and elegant manners. She was attended by

her whole family, assembled in Paris for the occasion; the bridegroom by his brother, a student at Heidelberg, and by General de Waldeyer and the Dowager Baroness Waldeyer of Alsace. It is said that the Hon. Mr. Audran had been their guest for a considerable period in the early part of the season at Colmar, and that, while travelling with them in Switzerland, he met Madame Dysart and her three daughters, and renewed an acquaintance which had previously existed in America, whither the parties are soon to return. Baron de Waldeyer also is accredited with some important political mission to Washington."

For later information we are referred to the following letter to

WALTER AUDRAN, ESQ., 28 LEOPOLD STRASSE, HEIDELBERG.

WASHINGTON, March 1, 1878.

DEAR WALTER, — To-morrow I am going home to New Brunswick, after a delightful visit of three weeks. Of the gayeties of the first ten days I have already written. With the coming in of Lent the great receptions were discontinued. Since then we have been dined and wined only three times, I believe, — at ——, and ——, and ——. Early in the season the invitations were addressed to the Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Audran, only; but since we have been sufficiently advertised, they are so constructed as to include us all. We are "the Audrans and Waldeyers," — a new party, in which society

evinces uncommon interest. Robert and his *ménage*, not to say his *menus*, have become a prominent social topic. He is a new man, from a new district. Everybody wanted to know what he was like. He was said to be a Colorado ranchero; and people expected, perhaps, that he would be "bearded like a pard," with a big felt hat and cavalry boots, and hang around the bar and corridors at Willard's. When they found their man in the quiet, clean-cut, scholarly personage who had taken Judge ——'s house, on I Street, for the season (it is one of the most ample and attractive in Washington), they were more curious than ever; they said he did not represent his constituency in the very least.

Since his first speech on the currency, which surprised and delighted Secretary Sherman, — and Mr. Dysart no less, — he has been regarded as one of the leaders of opinion in financial matters; and has been obliged to consent to go to Brussels next June, as the representative of "bi-metallism" (whatever that may be) in the "Monetary Conference."

This conclusion has precipitated another. The baron and Julia are to be married in May, and to go over at the same time. Baroness Julia de Waldeyer, of Hohentauben, — just think of it! They will go there, and our dear old baroness will entertain them. It is a shame to call her "old." There is a freshness about her which "dulls not, nor is worn."

They are to return at different times, but will all be here next winter.

Helen's receptions, on Tuesdays and Saturdays, are always fully attended. The house has parlors *en suite*, you know. Robert and Helen receive in the front room, and the baroness and Julia hold court in the other. The baroness is a great attraction. All the diplomatic corps adore her, and all the older set of Washington people. They say they have seen no such *grande dame* since Mrs. Madison's day. And at home she is so lovely, — perfectly devoted and invaluable to Helen, but keeping, we fancy, just a little out of Robert's way, for fear he might think her disposed to draw Helen away from him.

The baron lives at the Legation, but is apt to dine with us, and play chess with Julia in the evening. By the late hour at which she comes up-stairs, I should judge that they must have very complicated games. The community have speculated on the relations of the baroness to the family; but the current opinion seems to be formed on the statements made in Paris, — that she and the baron are old friends of Robert's. No pains are taken to enlarge their knowledge in this direction.

Robert says you must come back with him, — that is the best of all. He says you might easily have a place in the Capitol, as secretary of some committee; but neither you, nor any of us for you, would be content with an inferior position like that, even for a time. I quite agree with you that you should open your own office at Denver. Robert says business will flow to you at once.

My dear boy, how much life and love has grown up around and among us all since that blessed day when we sat on the grassy slope of Rigi and looked at the beautiful blue water! You, of course, are the first figure to me. I thank Heaven daily for your love, and I try to become what I think you would wish me to be.

"No steep is hard for Love's white feet to climb."

God be with you, dearest!

Affectionately,

YOUR ALICE.

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